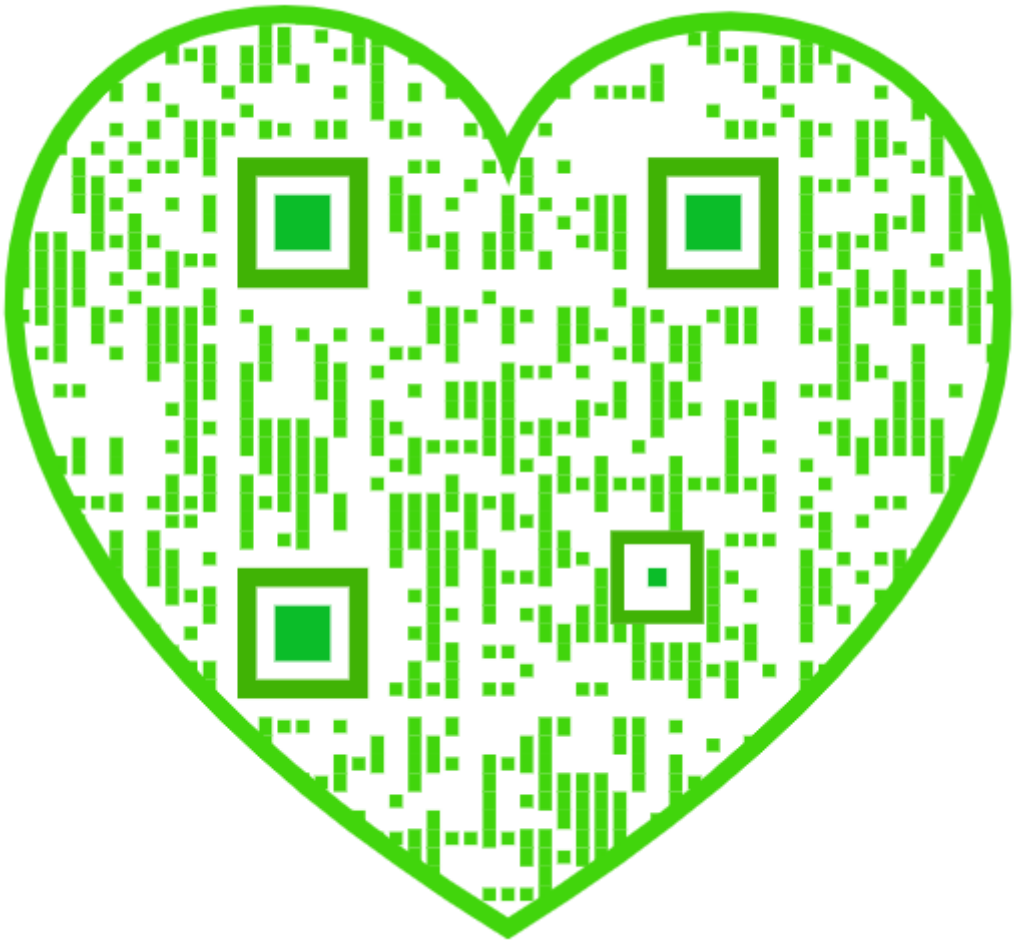
Letters to an Orphan

Rowe



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Letters to an Orphan

FROM A BUSINESS MAN
TO HIS STENOGRAPHER

BY

F. L. ROWE

F. L. ROWE, PUBLISHER
CINCINNATI, OHIO

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No. 1.

INTRODUCTION.

When a person plays an important part in any action that benefits an individual or society in general, it is but proper that recognition should be accorded such person.

These "Letters" in their inception were intended only for the one person or "Orphan" to whom addressed, and numbered only three or four. The recipient, recognizing some benefit in them to herself, encouraged the author to go on and write some more; and later suggested that they be revised and put in permanent form.

The author, therefore, feels it a pleasant duty to give credit for the existence of these "Letters" to one who, for eight years, was a faithful helper, and who in the later years of her service took such a personal interest in office matters as to make her invaluable.

No effort has been made to dress up these "Letters," and thus give them an unnatural stiffness. They are written in the author's

regular every-day style, and we believe possess more force in that particular form than if they had been written to bear literary inspection. The author's one hope is, that if these "Letters" have helped one person, they may help others.

THE AUTHOR.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
On Praying	9
Dancing	19
Friendship	29
The Ministry of Flowers	37
Patience	45
Humility	53
True Love	63
Mother	75
Woman's Influence	87
A Light in the Window	95
"Oh, but I Promised to Help You."	105
Nobody Cares	113
Living, but Useless	123
A Quarter of a Century	133
Sacrificing for Others	143
It Might be Worse	151

PAGE

NEVER HAD A CHANCE..... 159

MARRIAGE 167

UNCROWNED HEROES..... 175

AN EDUCATED WIFE..... 187

A VISION OF LIFE..... 195

IDEALIZING THE REAL..... 207

FRIEND, SWEETHEART, WIFE..... 215

ON PRAYING.

ON PRAYING.

In one of our talks you told me you had quit praying. I asked you why, and you gave me an evasive answer; but I gathered enough from your reply to know that the cause is, that others whom you think ought to set the example do not live up to their profession as Christians. Therefore you become disgusted and form your conclusion: "What's the use?"

I am glad I know so much about God's dealings with you in the past. And knowing how God has blessed you in answering your prayers, I am surprised that you are now so easily shaken in your faith. And when I recall, too, that you, like Timothy of old, "have known the holy scriptures from your youth up"; that you have learned them from a godly mother, I can the less readily understand why you have now turned your back on God.

"Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" asked Job. You expect perfection in other Christians.

You expect too much. You expect in them more than you can give in yourself. We are all human beings — not yet perfect. Perhaps others whom you love and respect, and who are morally perfect, have also discouraged you in regard to prayer. There are many who are trusting to sheer morality to save them. But you have not so learned Christ. Has not your own father done things contrary to your wishes, yet have you turned on him? Have you always had your own way with your mother? Yet you still love her. Has not your Heavenly Father, therefore, the right to chasten you, or delay his answers? And should this cause you to turn your back on him, because of the weakness of a fellow man? Would you cease to love your own mother or father because your own fleshly brother had displeased you or discouraged you? Is not your brother as likely to prove weak as yourself?

But suppose you do turn your back on your Heavenly Father, by your persistent failure to pray; let me in all seriousness ask the same question that the Savior asked his apostles:

"Will you also go away?" Peter answered him: "To whom can we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." "To you, therefore, who have tasted the good word of life, and now put it from you, it had been better for you not to have known the way of righteousness, than after having known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto you. The latter end is worse with them than the beginning."

I know you do not want to jeopardize your eternal salvation by neglecting so important a duty as prayer simply because of your displeasure with the conduct of others. Read the entire book of Job. See how he suffered the afflictions that the Lord sent upon him; how Satan and evil ones tried to poison his mind against Jehovah. Did they succeed? No; but rather he cried out, "Though he slay me, yet I will trust him."

And has it not occurred to you that those who discourage you are themselves in need of your prayers in their behalf? You know nothing, perhaps, of their state of mind, of the loads upon their hearts and their deep

humiliation of spirit, so that they may feel like Paul when he said, "Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Why should you not the rather extend to such your sympathy, your prayers, your helping hand, and the benefit of your stronger mind? Isn't it possible that others might be discouraged and quit when they learn the unhappy impression they have made on you? Would it not be better, then, to pray one for another?

But I fear your present aversion to prayer is because you have not fully appreciated the privilege that prayer affords you. Do you give it serious thought? Do you put your entire heart in it as fervently one time as you do another? Do you treat the Lord as faithfully and as trustingly as you would your own parents? Do you offer your prayers in faith, believing they will be answered? Or are they formal, and coupled with doubt and misgiving? Have you done your part in trying to bring about the answers to your own prayers? God helps those who help them-

selves, and every time there is a failure it is on the human side and not on the Divine. You can not find one instance where the Lord has ever proved faithless, but he has ever been ready to bless his dutiful children.

David was a man after God's own heart, yet he found it necessary to pray "evening, morning and noon." The Savior in his talk to his disciples directed them to "pray for those who despitefully use you." The Savior himself also found it necessary to pray, and spent many hours in bitter anguish of heart, praying to his Heavenly Father, and even "continued all night in prayer to God." And yet we murmur because, after a few minutes' petition, our prayers are not immediately answered and according to our wants. How few of us are willing to say, "Not my will, Lord, but thine be done"? Paul and the other writers enjoin upon Christians the necessity of "praying without ceasing." James emphasizes the value of the effectual, fervent prayer, and urges us to "ask in faith, nothing wavering," and recognize our dependence upon each

other for that comfort, sympathy and help which only Christians can give to each other. Should I lose interest in you because you ceased to pray? Nay, verily. But rather should I pray with determination, that God might restore you to your first love. Indeed, I would "commit sin in ceasing to pray for you," and so I would never let the shades of night gather over me without making "mention of you in my prayers."

If you feel you are weak in faith, ask the Lord, like the disciples of old, to "increase your faith." Nothing but weakness of faith could drive from his side one who has enjoyed the nearness to our Heavenly Father that you have. In fact, the persecutions of the world, and even Christians, who may "despitefully use you," ought to drive you nearer to the perfect One. He only can give you health, and strength, and comfort when all earthly friends have failed.

If you have tasted and found from past experience that he has blessed you, why allow yourself to be discouraged and driven from

him by the conduct of others? Has he proven false? You would not forsake even an earthly friend unless you had found him untrue as a friend. If you would "grapple to your soul with hooks of steel" those who have proven true in an earthly sense, how much more should you prize and hold to "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother"?

We read of strong tests of faith from God's Word; how Abraham was willing to offer up his son Isaac; how Moses was hid away and preserved for a useful service, and how he "suffered affliction rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin." And then consider the grand characters in Christ's day — of the persecutions of his followers. Consider what Paul endured. Yes, and much of his persecution was from his own brethren, those who should have known better. But what does he say as a result of all this? He asks, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution?"

And did these things influence him? No. He said, "Forgetting the things that are be-

hind, I press forward." And toward the end he declared, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." And what was to be his reward? The "crown of righteousness which was laid up for him."

Will you let anything separate you from the love of Christ? To whom can you go?

DANCING.

DANCING.

You told me in our last talk that your mother had recently said that she intended to let your younger sister take dancing lessons and enjoy more of the world than you had.

Perhaps the meaning of your mother was not as broad as your language indicated, but it nevertheless caused me some concern. Your mother, throughout her life, has been, to my personal knowledge, a devout woman; one whose life has been spent in the work of the church. And from my association with her in that sphere of usefulness, I have always regarded her as a model Christian character. I can not feel that she considers her life a disappointment or a regret, so far as the influence of the church is concerned. I do not believe that she regards your life misdirected or in any sense a grief to her, in so far as the church has been identified with your life. Any failures that may have resulted, I am sure can not be chargeable to the church. On the other hand, I feel confident that the

church, or the intimate relation that you have maintained with your Savior, has been, many times, a matter of great comfort to you. I do not believe that either of you would live your lives over and live a worldly life. This may seem pleasant for a short time; and as you behold the superficial pleasure of many who are worldly, you may feel, at times, that they are the ones who are really getting the good out of life. But to you, when the hour of death approaches, there will never be any anguish of heart or crushing grief in knowing that your end on earth has come and the endless Eternity is before you. To the one who has enjoyed the world, where is there comfort? But to you and your mother there will be that peace of mind and that satisfaction that comes to lives that have been lived in harmony with the teaching of the Lord.

You will say that your life has been so imperfect; yes, so has mine, and I believe much more so than yours. But I must, after all, believe that the good Lord will reward, with eternal salvation, those of his children who have faithfully tried to do their best

against overwhelming odds and under most trying conditions.

Accordingly, when you told me that your mother was going to indulge your younger sister I felt that it must be an admission by your mother that her Christian life has not been a success; and so I can only feel that it is because she has not maintained that close relation to her Heavenly Father that his child should. The happiest children of this world are those who live in the presence and communion of their earthly parents. It is only those who shun their mother and father whose lives must truly be miserable.

Your younger sister may be fortunate in her associations, and again she may not. All who are fully informed know the danger from the promiscuous intimacy of individuals as must be the case in dancing. Those who engage in this pastime can not always choose their companions, and many a young, tender, beautiful lily in human form, the idol of a mother's heart, may be attracted by worldly associations and led into evil paths.

The Psalmist has said, "There is a time to

weep and a time to dance." As an exercise, there is nothing more healthful than the dance. I know that it adds grace and symmetry to a woman's personal attractions. No one could raise the slightest objection to dancing when engaged in by women alone or by men alone. But human nature is such that they are not satisfied, as they were in the Bible times, to dance separately; that is, each sex with others of that sex. There could be no harm in such an arrangement; and the poetry of motion is to be admired as much as the poetry of language.

I remember one time a good Christian girl in the State of Kentucky asked my father if there would be any harm in her dancing. He said, "No, dance if you want to — go out in the kitchen and dance." She said she did not mean that, but to attend social dancing. He answered her, "That is a different matter." And I am sure he satisfied her as to the unfitness for one of her calling as a Christian to lend her influence to a worldly and questionable indulgence.

I can remember, too, when I was a boy,

when my mother would refuse me permission to join the dancing crowd, how I would boldly threaten that when I became twenty-one I could do as I pleased, and I would then certainly dance. I recall her characteristic answer, that she was not worrying about what happened after I was twenty-one, but she intended to keep me from it until that time and she would risk me after that.

Now I see the wisdom of her strict motherly discipline. I used the argument with her that she, when a girl, according to her own admission, had attended social dances, but she gave me a satisfactory answer. In her girlhood days, when the people were widely separated, they had few opportunities for social enjoyment. The early settlers were all people of sterling character; pioneers who had moved in to develop the country and rear their families. Their purposes in life and their interests were all of such common nature that they could be regarded as one large family. And they loved each other with real devotion. The families were all fixtures; their lives were open books, their characters could be read in their con-

duct; their young people were safe in each other's company.

The dances in her days, so she said, were entirely different from what we see to-day. There was none of the vulgar intimacy that is seen now in the common round dance. The music that they followed was slow, and every movement was one of refinement, and there was no bold display that you see in the dress of to-day. They concluded their dance at reasonable hours, and all returned to their homes happier for the neighborhood meeting, and rested and strengthened by the change, and courageously resigned to the home duties, even though it might be weeks before they would again meet each other. To-day, as she remarked, we have hundreds of opportunities for diversion and of a profitable nature. There are thousands of our best books for our mental enlightenment; any number of good lectures and concerts that can be attended; all kinds of hearty, out-door exercises that can be enjoyed, and other modern arrangements for physical development; and a score of other forms of entertainment and wholesome recreations that

provide a pleasing variety. So that I feel, as she expressed, that we need not go back to the pioneer days to justify our conduct to-day.

As a Christian, therefore, I feel we ought to heed Paul's advice to "avoid the appearance of evil." It is better to be on the safe side with less pleasure than to be on the dangerous side with questionable pleasure.

FRIENDSHIP.

FRIENDSHIP.

There is nothing more beautiful in all the world than the happiness and confidence of true friends. The world in its comprehension of the term "friendship" regards it carelessly. There is not the understanding and appreciation of it, in the common mind, that the true meaning of the word should convey. Many of those who are called friends are nothing more than business or social acquaintances. Even the Chinese, whom we regard as heathen, in their moral maxims plainly distinguish between acquaintances and friends. They may be pleasant, even congenial, and yet might not be safe friends, in the true sense.

The world is full of prosperity-friends who will do anything for you so long as things are bright and sunshiny along your path. As commonly expressed, they are friends "as long as the money holds out," or your prosperity continues. Such acquaintances are the ones who are ready to intrude upon you and oftentimes use their pretended friendship to

cloak some selfish desire or demand; the loan of money or other favors that they forget to return. We sometimes tolerate such acquaintances, while inwardly wishing that we could once and forever rid ourselves of their annoyance.

But it is not of this class that I write in this letter. I want to speak of the true friendship, that may be as beautiful in its manifestation as the flowers that you cultivate in your garden; for, indeed, friendship is a work of cultivation. It is only by knowing and being a part of the life and labor involved in developing another life that we are enabled to appreciate the hardships endured and the corresponding blessings received and enjoyed. True friendship weaves a mantle about the happy members of such associations; and when I speak of true friendship I do not confine it to that intimate companionship of two persons, but make it so broad that it could include an indefinite circle who had been carefully selected, and ones whose acquaintance and friendship had been thoroughly developed and tested.

And Confucius, the spiritual oracle of the East, makes equally strong his statement when he says, "Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles."

But friendship should be mutual and retroactive. It doesn't take one long to discover the hold, or power, he may have over another. And happy that mortal who has discovered his influence for good over the mind and life of his friends. Emerson so nicely states my ideas when he says, "Our chief want in life is somebody who shall make us do what we can. This is the service of a friend. There is a sublime attraction in him to whatever virtue there is in us. How he flings wide the door of existence!"

And right here I want to include a beautiful sentiment as recorded by Mr. Bancroft, the historian, in Penn's treaty with the Indians: "The friendship between me and you I will not compare to a chain; for that the rains might rust, or the falling tree might break."

However, this letter may be more effective if I consider also the friendship as would exist between two good friends. These attachments

are not formed and matured in a day. They are sometimes the product of long acquaintance. Better one true friend than an army of uncertain acquaintances. What do they amount to when an hour of trial comes, when the foul reports are gossiped about, when reverses come? How ready a true friend is at such a time to prove himself. Indeed,

> "Friendship, of itself an holy tie,
> Is made more sacred by adversity."

Shallow friends flee from you like leaves before the winter winds, and you are made to realize as never before how hollow the professed friendship of some is. But, on the other hand, one or two friends are drawn to you in an hour like this by an irresistible impulse like the needle to the magnet. What a solace they are and refuge from the storms of life, and what words of comfort come from the heart and to the heart! They carry in every expression the sentiment of that grand old hymn:

> "When each can feel his brother's woe,
> And with him bear a part."

Our friend Shakespeare, whom you have

enjoyed reading, beautifully expresses the strength of true friendship thus:

"The friends thou hast and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel."

Words could hardly be found to impress a stronger bond. And note that he emphasizes the need of trying or testing their friendships, and if found true make them a very part of your life, so that no human power could terminate or break these spiritual bands of steel. They make life more than tolerable against overwhelming discouragements.

The fond mother, looking into the eyes of her innocent child, endeavors to instill into its undeveloped mind the power of attachment and devotion. Most naturally when the child grows older the mother is its only refuge against all the little scars and mishaps that befall this heavenly blessing. And this same devotion properly develops between friends whose confidence has never been betrayed and whose lives have been a happy association. Why should there not be such friendships? And yet how often the cold-hearted world will look upon intimate friendships, especially if

they be between the opposite sexes, with suspicion! Why is it not possible for circumstances to have developed friendships? They are just as proper and sacred as those beautiful examples we read of in the Sacred Book or portrayed by the poets and artists.

I hardly need to call your attention to that "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." As a Christian you know him and have found him greater than earthly friends, and "a very present help in time of trouble."

Friends may come and friends may go, but God lives on forever.

THE MINISTRY OF FLOWERS.

THE MINISTRY OF FLOWERS.

There is no form of service rendered to friends that has given me more genuine pleasure than the bestowal of flowers. These have a lauguage all their own; yet their silent speech is appreciated, apparently, by the infant in the cradle as well as by the grandmother of three score and ten, who sits by the window and enjoys the prospect of the gayly-decked dooryard and the perfume that greets her.

We lose much of life because we are not content to do little things, as acts of respect and friendship. If we could all appreciate, as I have learned to by experience, the sincere happiness that is given to friends and acquaintances, even in the gift of a few common flowers, we would do more in this easy ministry.

I can recall one season when I had unusual success and pleasure in the raising of flowers and bestowing them. I picked and prepared nearly two hundred bouquets from my garden, carrying them to people in all walks of life.

I found that the well-to-do person, who was compelled to live in a flat building, could show quite as much appreciation in being remembered as those who were poor. I found that these flowers were alike welcome to the man who stood at the corner selling papers, the girl in the office, in the restaurant and in other business houses, the afflicted ones at the hospitals; and men and boys were made quite as happy in receiving them as those of the gentler sex. Those to whom I carried flowers frequently, and who, in a way, came to expect them, were always happy in their anticipation. And I can recall several whose eyes fairly sparkled when they saw the flowers in my hand. And their simple, but heartfelt, "Thank you" was more pay to me than all the money in the realm.

I emphasize this personal service only to suggest to you and others how easily they could take up this beautiful ministry; add to the pleasure of others, and brighten life for the whole human family. And it isn't the flowers of rare variety or exquisite beauty, as

it is the common flowers, that any one can raise. The violets, pyrithums, lilies of the valley, nasturtiums — these all require almost no attention, and some of them will bloom all summer. And the pure sweet peas in all their delicate shadings can be made to fill a narrow line of ground that would, doubtless, not be occupied otherwise.

I have often wondered why so little is said about flowers in the Bible. Very few species are mentioned, and they are nowhere treated from a scientific point of view. Their beauty is once or twice alluded to in descriptive passages. The Egyptians were exceedingly fond of flowers and put them on their monuments. Gardens were in use among the Orientals from the earliest times, yet they appear to have been chiefly cultivated for useful purposes. Despite their absence from the Bible, let us rejoice that we to-day can enjoy them in all their beauty and glory, and rejoice that man's inquisitive nature has enabled him to produce and develop varieties that show increasing beauty with each succeeding year. The poets have sung of

flowers, and the artists labor with unceasing devotion to bring out the delicate hues in their nature studies.

Life is a garden with every form of growth. There are some that simply grow and receive no special care. Others are cultivated, and, being carefully protected, develop the greatest beauty. Some grow by the pathway, and hide among the grass and are almost unseen. Then there are some thistles, but the careful husbandman watches for these and seeks to destroy them.

Some flowers are like some people, of exquisite beauty, and texture, and fragrance, and yet unseen, because of their natural modesty. I recall the days when I roamed the hills of Northern Ohio after the first few warm days of spring, seeking the beautiful trailing arbutus — a small, delicate wax bloom that lay on the ground, and generally under a cluster of dead leaves. We always had to scratch away the leaves to find this beautiful flower, and oh! how fragrant it was; unlike any other bloom I can think of. Then there are some flowers that exude their sweetest fragrance

only when crushed. How many in life do we find who never reveal their true character and real worth until they have stood the test through suffering, calamity or persecution? And there are others that are sensitive plants. The slightest breath of cold air or even the human touch will blast and destroy their lives.

PATIENCE.

PATIENCE.

As I look back over the lives of some whom we have known and contemplate what surprising changes have come into their lives, I am impressed with the flight of time and the uncertainty of all things, as relating to life and the proper enjoyment of life. It is well for us, doubtless, that an all-wise Father does not let us know what is ahead of us, with certainty, even for a day of time. As young people, we have often built hopes that our lives might follow certain courses and our places of usefulness in the world measure up to the standards that we fix when we build our castles and picture our ideals. Hon. John Hay, who was Secretary of State a few years ago, holding a position of honor and confidence, is quoted as saying that if he had known what was ahead of him thirty years ago, he did not believe he would have had the courage to make the start. And I am sure that all of us would shrink from the expe-

riences before us if we knew all that we would have to go through.

On the other hand, when we consider the lives of those who are to-day suffering patiently and uncomplainingly, we must conclude that our Heavenly Father does really give us grace and strength sufficient to bear up under all these disappointed hopes, or even bodily suffering. And the lives of these patient sufferers tell us that as they are, we may also be some day; so that when we hope for a serene old age, free from bodily ailments, we have no certainty what our future will be. But how fortunate that we can profit by the lives of those afflicted ones, and through their patient suffering learn to be prepared for any change that time may bring to us.

Just now I think of a strong, brainy man of God who stood in the pulpit of one of our largest churches fifteen years ago. He was a man of massive physique; his face literally aglow with health, revealing a noble manhood. As a pulpit orator he was a powerful man, and he has held his audiences spell-bound when he has been wrought up in physical

sympathy with his sermon. I used to sit and admire him in all of his manly strength and intellectual power, and inwardly wish that some day I might possess the magnetic influence that he had over the hearts and minds of his people. To-day, while he is still in the prime of life, he is helplessly paralyzed. He can hardly move a muscle and must be helped by his attendants even in changing his position on his couch. He can not even hold a book to read, and when I saw him in his home it produced a sad impression on my mind when I realized the power he once possessed and his present enforced idleness. His mind has not suffered and his intellect is as keen as ever, but the few words he speaks come with great effort. His faithful wife and devoted daughter care for him tenderly and lovingly, and this godly man is happy in his life from day to day. Happy, I am sure, for several reasons: because of the grand work he has done and the influence he has exerted over the hearts of others. Happy, because he is the recipient of so much kindness from his own family and his own brethren and neighbors.

Happy, because his condition has enlarged even the sympathies of his great heart so that he can better appreciate what Christ has suffered. Happy, because he knows that through his suffering he can enjoy heaven more.

I think again of a noble woman, who for fully fifteen years suffered from the awful ravages of a cancer. Her devoted husband, who was a devout Christian, preceded her to the home beyond by six years; and during this time she was seldom able to even sit up; hour after hour, day after day, week after week, year after year she patiently lay upon her bed waiting for the Lord to relieve her suffering, which some days would be so intense that she would have to shriek out in awful agony. She told me that the sharp pains from the constantly-gnawing, diseased center would sometimes seem to flash through her brain and almost drive her crazy; and yet through all these years that I have known her, including several visits to her bedside, I have never heard her complain, but she always said in a spirit of resignation: "If it is the Lord's will I can endure it."

I could also mention another good old soul, one you have known by letters received. This one, however, has not been physically afflicted, but has suffered the very unusual experience of being the last one on the family tree. The good old soul, while nearly ninety years of age, has been alone, so far as earthly ties are concerned, for the past twenty years; and how often has she told me has she prayed so earnestly that the Lord would take her home, where she could be with those she has known and loved. And yet this good sister has never made complaint of God's dealings with her.

I could tell you of others, and might even refer to our good friend Job. But I have mentioned these from life for the purpose of calling your attention to the heaven-born virtue of patience. I speak of it as heaven-born, for unless these living examples referred to understood God's purpose in dealing with them, they would not be able to endure to the end. It is only Christians who can bear up under these awful bodily sorrows; and just as these lives are valuable in impressing us with the uncertainty of our own lives, so, also, do they give

us strength that we may labor on in our own individual sphere, and let our Heavenly Father plan our own future as may seem best to him. We all need to cultivate the virtue of patience. We live through the period of youthful enthusiasm. When that begins to wane we must develop into the substantial, evenly-balanced tenor of life; and when we reach the period where well-earned rest should follow labor, if it be our lot to suffer as others have, let us then be prepared, through previous years of discipline, to be resigned.

HUMILITY.

HUMILITY.

It seems like an anomaly to say that the greatest character in all history was the one who was supremely humble. And yet his humility was what proved his real greatness and has won the hearts of people through all ages.

In our every-day experiences we seldom meet one who specially impresses us in the possession of this particular virtue. In our human dealings we are so prone to consider our own standing. Few of us are willing to manifest the divine spirit of humility, for fear we may stand in an unjust light; and we accordingly defend ourselves, lest we be misjudged or misunderstood. Many times it requires some event in our lives to bring us to our senses and cause us to realize that we must not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. And if it were not for these experiences, too many of us would essay to carry our heads too high in our haughty self-righteousness, and not be considerate of

our brother's weakness. However, on the other hand, aside from our desire to conceal some things from the world, and our endeavor to keep our feelings and our thoughts from our friends, we are kept humble in the consciousness that God knows all things. Humble in mind and humble in life.

There are many people among your friends and mine whose outward appearances belie their inward feelings. We sometimes misjudge them and call them proud, all because they may have a certain independent manner about them, and a properly proud spirit. Yet these same people, when truly understood, are the very humblest, and willing to occupy any position of service, not only to prove their humility, but because their very hearts are humble. In fact, "humility is the root from which all heavenly virtues shoot." And the Savior, in one of his conversations with his disciples, reminded them that "he who would be greatest among them must be the servant of all."

As I have referred to the Savior, let me point out to you some of the characteristics

of that perfect man, that we may more fully comprehend what was combined in the world's peerless character, Jesus of Nazareth. As I said in the beginning of this letter, it seems out of the natural order of things to speak of the greatest man in the world's history as the humblest. And yet you know this is true. In fact, he could not have made slaves of human hearts had he not thrown his mantle of humility around all mankind and made them feel that they were, in deed and in truth, all one holy family, of which he was the head.

But here are some of the virtues that Jesus possessed: he was affectionate, benevolent and compassionate; gentle, guileless and holy; humble, innocent and just; kind, long-suffering, and with a love that passeth knowledge; lowly, meek and merciful; self-poised, obedient and patient; perfect, full of pity and pure; righteous, sanctified and sinless; zealous, spotless and true; undefiled, unselfish, courageous.

Certainly here is a chain of virtues that no other mortal will ever possess. We think we are fairly good if we can lay claim to two or three of these traits; yet this great man,

who is worshiped by millions of people of all ranks and stations throughout the whole world, is not beneath the service of falling on his knees and bathing his disciples' feet. The fact that he was the Son of God did not cause him to be proof against the human feelings that we possess. Even though he was in the form of God, he was in all points tempted and tried as we are; and considering this, it makes him a still more wonderful character to think that the one who was absolutely without sin and needed no forgiveness could cause himself to be the great example to the human race. We read of Mary, who sat at his feet to receive his instruction. We also read of the man, out of whom Jesus had cast the demons, sitting at his feet. And also of the sinful woman who, in true humility, in the presence of this pure man whose spotless character rebuked her life and made her sin so glaring, prostrated herself at his feet and washed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed them in her penitential love. Did Jesus, in his pure

condition, resent her conduct? Pure as he was, he used this poor woman as a stinging rebuke to the critical Pharisee and brought out the lesson of true forgiveness. And only the truly humble could, in our day, assume such an attitude toward an unfortunate creature.

There are some in the church to-day, even holding positions of leadership, who would consider it beneath their dignity and calling to help the sinful man; some who would manifest the spirit of superiority or self-righteousness, like the Pharisee of old, who would say, "I thank thee, Lord, that I am not like other men." Such leaders will not long hold their positions. They may be those whose sins have not yet found them out. They may seem to prosper for a season, but the Lord will, in his own time, send them to their own place. A spirit in any degree different from the spirit of the perfect One is not the spirit of the true leader to-day. But he who would be greatest must learn to be the servant of all. And I do believe there is real happiness in the humble service that David indicated

when he said he would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of the wicked.

As I have already said, the fact that Jesus was the Son of God did not free him from bodily suffering. While he is spoken of as without sin and as one in whom there was no iniquity at all, and while we scan each item in his many virtues, we are, nevertheless, concerned about his physical nature — his sufferings, which caused his humility to be more deeply impressive. While he was the very Son of God and had power to command a legion of angels to give him personal protection, nevertheless he meekly submitted to all humiliation because he was doing his Father's will. And let us ever keep in mind that he was just as obedient in all things to his Heavenly Father as we have been to our earthly parents. Behold this man in all his conflicts with the evil one! It wasn't once or twice, but throughout his three years' ministry. And if ever man was afflicted, he was that one. He was painfully acquainted with grief; he was betrayed by his friends; placed

in bonds by his enemies; bruised on the cross, and chastised for our iniquities. He was crucified for our sins, and he endured the taunting crown of thorns that he might be exalted in heaven as King of Kings. He was despised by those whom he came to bless. Yes, he was hated without a cause, and in his humiliation he suffered the pangs of hunger. He was compassed about with infirmities; he groaned with human pain as he lay down his life for you and for me, yet greater in power than any one who ever walked on earth. Yes, he was left alone, but only that he might be lifted up that all eyes might behold him, and that all men might be drawn to him; triumphant in his death, the first fruits of them that slept; a willing, ready sacrifice, because obedience to his Heavenly Father demanded it. Exalted on his throne in heaven, he awaits those who, through like humiliation, seek salvation in his name.

And what shall I say more? I would that I could call your attention to many examples of humiliation in practical life. There are Abraham, Jacob and Moses, Joshua, Gideon

and David, Solomon, Job and Isaac, together with the character of Paul. And there are living examples known to you and to me.

But let us learn the lesson from these worthies, that true humility is the beginning of all greatness; and in the words of Kebbe, an English churchman and poet, say in closing:

> "God has sworn to lift on high,
> Who sinks himself by true humility."

TRUE LOVE.

TRUE LOVE.

This is not a subject we have discussed to any extent, but one that enters into every life at some stage of its existence. True love doesn't always continue, but oftentimes takes the opposite form, as a result of some bitter experience, causing the individual to become sour on the world and ever after exerting a gloomly influence over others. But true love should not embitter itself against all mankind because of the thoughtless or inconsiderate conduct of some one person. True love is rather strengthened and sweetened by adverse experiences. The strength of our affection is sometimes brought out by the trials that we experience, and which help to develop our character. True love is not an emotion for the gentler sex alone to possess, but one to fill the heart and life of man and woman alike. It is not selfish nor confined to one person or one home. A man does not possess true love who loves his wife only; nor does a woman love truly who confines her affection to her

husband only. These naturally and properly are the recipients of the strongest expression of true love, but our love should be as broad as the very world itself. All who are trying to do right, and face the uncertain battle of life, need our love, our affection, our sympathy, our help; and it is no improper use of the term "love" to speak of our deep interest in others as true love.

Christians, individually and collectively, are enjoined by all the sacred writers to love one another fervently. Paul devotes one entire chapter in his Corinthian Letter, making love his sole theme. So strong was his conception of what love to one another should be, as revealed in that one chapter, that the grand old man of England, Mr. Gladstone, was inspired to write a book with that chapter as his subject. The entire life of Christ was made up of exhibitions of love to all mankind, regardless of race or color. Paul enjoined upon us to imitate our divine Master when he says, "Do good to all men, but especially to those of the household of faith."

True love is ever active; is thoughtful,

thinking of others rather than self; and in the possession of this love there is the constant desire to help one another. And when love is the basis for our action, such service is not labor, but a positive delight. How often do we try to anticipate the very wants of those we love, and what effort will we put forth, or what sacrifice will we not suffer in order that we may do something to express our love for one another.

One day I saw a little child, an infant, walking by its father's side. The father was a laboring man, going home from work, and had on his soiled working clothes. The little baby was carrying the evening paper and a small parcel. They had not walked far until the baby wanted to be carried. The father picked up the child and took the parcel from it and wanted to put the paper in his pocket, but the baby clung to that; and, although her father was carrying her, she was happy in the thought that she was relieving her father's burden by carrying the paper for him. Her little eyes fairly beamed with delight in thinking that she was helping to bear the burden

of life for her father, and he wouldn't have disabused her mind or hurt her feelings by depriving her of that thought. How true that is of us older folks. How often, perhaps, are we allowed to think that we are doing some great service, by those who know that we really take pleasure in doing those little acts of service, prompted solely by love one for another; and how happy we are, with the child-like nature, in knowing that we are thus thought of. I am sure there are many times when all of us have been saved from spells of despondency with some reminder of true love from some of our closest friends.

What is the supreme test of love? Christ tells us that the willingness to die, one for the other, is the highest test. Yet, peradventure, for a good man one would even dare to die, and we find in the death of Christ more than the literal carrying out of that statement. Some would argue that Christ, being divine and the Son of God, had to die the death in order to fulfill all righteousness. Nevertheless, we should remember that Christ suffered in all points physically as we do. Yet, while

Christ was divine and the Son of God, he was, nevertheless, human in all points of nature. He suffered mentally the same as we do. A physical injury would cause him as much pain as it would us; and the suffering that he endured when nailed upon the cross was beyond the power of the human mind to describe or feel. We, therefore, have in the death of Christ the supreme test of love.

But are we put to such tests to-day? Perhaps not in fact, but there are those who would meet the test if it were forced upon them. They would meet it unconsciously in the discharge of their duty toward the object of their affection. Is there a true mother who would not sacrifice her life if thereby she could save the life of her child? In a moment of danger, in a spell of serious sickness, the mother's position and condition are not thought of. The safety of her child is her one concern. Take, for illustration, a young and budding girl, away from home. perhaps her first year in college. She is taken down with a serious disease, typhoid fever. The mother's first thought is, "I must go." Perhaps she

has a husband and other children at home. Perhaps her second thought is, "Who will take care of them?" She delays a day, hoping for encouraging news. The next day a telegram comes saying that her daughter is no better. Her mother instinct tells her that the charitable wording of that telegram means, "Your daughter is worse." Does she longer delay? The first train she can board carries her to her sick daughter at a snail's pace. "Will the train ever reach my daughter?" She is in a state of nervous collapse. Perhaps some necessary delay of the train at a junction further tries her patience and her anixety knows no restraint. She pleads with the conductor, "Do hurry on, my daughter may be dying." After a day of mental torment she reaches the little station. With the speed that lends wings to a mother's love she hurries through the streets. She rushes to her daughter's side, and as she enters the door is cautioned by the nurse to make no noise, that the daughter is sleeping. She does not heed the nurse, but rushes to the bedside, throws her arms about the child, kisses her fervently,

and says, "My dear daughter, are you sick?" With a semi-conscious glance of recognition her daughter gives a faint smile. Instinctively the mother knows her daughter is very sick. The nurse tries to lead her away. Will the mother leave the child? Not while life lasts. And then begins her long, patient vigil. All the power of persuasion by the doctor, the nurse, the matron, can not move her. She will not leave the child's side to take some sleep, and day in and day out, for weeks, she stays beside her daughter, seeking only the faint ray of hope that the doctor, in his generous heart, tries to give her. The critical time arrives. How she watches every breath, the heaving of the bosom, the expression of the eye, every motion of her body! Why? Because that child is her own flesh and blood. No one knows but the mother herself what she has suffered to give that child her existence, and the very memory of all she has suffered makes that child all the more dear to her; and she has never a thought concerning her own condition, thinking only of her efforts to save her child. The critical day is past.

The doctor says she will get well. That isn't all. For weeks they have been under heavy expense. Perhaps they are moderately poor people. Perhaps they own just a little home in the little town where thy have drudged for years to earn and save a little. Does the idea of expense give her any anxiety? Does the fact that the daughter may be left a physical wreck disturb her mind? Does the thought that it will put them back perhaps fifteen years in the accumulation for a home change her love for her child? Not for a second. "What if my child is left an invalid? The rest of us will care for her. What if we do have to sell the home to pay the hospital bill? We have our child, and all the wealth in the world can not buy our love for her."

This, you may say, is mother love. It is nature love, but it is no stronger love than we should have for each other, if we, as Christians, have the spirit of mind of our Savior. Can you find an example of human love that will bear comparison with the love of our Heavenly Father? And no human love has reached the ideal, the perfect state, unless it

possesses the nature of the Father's love. How may we understand the Father's love? Simply by the Son's love. "He that hath seen me," says Christ, "hath seen the Father," and by imitating Christ we will imitate the Father, and by loving the Son we will love the Father. And Christ revealed his love to his Father by the obedience that he gave to his Father, even to his death on the cross, that being his Father's will.

MOTHER.

MOTHER.

In one of our first talks I learned from you that the term "mother" does not possess, to you, all the tender or sentimental emotion that it does to me. I am sure you love your mother just as sincerely, but your love is what would be called platonic or philosophical love; whereas mine is emotional or demonstrative. Each of us loves our mother according to the way we have been raised and as our natures incline.

I am sure there is no higher type of love, that either of us experience, than that of love for mother. I can look back through a period of nearly forty years, and live over some of my baby life with mother. To me, the recollection of mother, when she would take me on her lap to rock me to sleep again, is not a poetic sentiment, but a re-living of the happiest time of life. You, too, can recall days that were as full of delightful anticipation as though you were to be queen of the May to-morrow. With us, each day was to be

but the happy realization of the panorama of happy dreams of the night before. We did not think about our clothes, our meals, our safety — never thought of them. We were children — mother would take care of all that. The aches, the bruises, the hurt feelings, were all mended in mother's peculiar way. And we sang, and played, and galloped, and danced with an exuberance of energy that knew no exhaustion. Why were we so? Because we were care-free, honest, clean, truthful, trustful, sincere; and where these traits abound, even in old age, there is that same childhood happiness. But oh, what a change, what a miserable existence begins when we forget mother and cease to make her our counselor! Sometimes children can hide their conduct, but generally mother can detect at once if there is any deception developing in her once happy child.

The worst of mortals have tears to shed when reminded of the early home ties. The most hardened criminal can be humbled by singing "Home, Sweet Home." I heard a band of Salvation Army workers in Louisiana

sing "Be Good to a Man When He's Down" in front of a saloon, and a dozen or more half-drunken men were drawn to the sidewalk by the words recalling mother, "who could see good in him yet."

Then, too, there are the little keepsakes—mementos—something mother made, or something mother gave us. How we prize that! How the memories cluster about it! How we recall the happy days, mother's cheery voice, her words of encouragement to us in our childish delusion that we were helping mother!

I made a watch chain of plum stones when I was four years old. We would fit the stones in a piece of wood and grind them flat into links on the big stone by the kitchen door. My older brother would cut the stones and link them together. For nearly twenty-five years mother kept that chain, and I had forgotten it, but when she gave it to me, all the scenes of the happy days were revived as though a curtain had been lifted from the painting. How sacredly mother guards those childhood trophies! A pair of little shoes, a pretty plaid dress, a little red coat, a wee pair

of stockings — playthings for a doll, you'd think. Among the precious things we found after mother died was an old picture — a daguerreotype — of herself when a grown girl — a young lady, I should say. None of us had ever seen it, and she had guarded it for fifty years. And when it was handed around, and we all beheld her girlish face, we looked at each other in amazement — she was the exact picture of one of her granddaughters, my dear niece, Besse. And, oh, how we all love Besse, not any better than the others, but because in her we behold the living presence of mother in her girlhood. And as I write these lines, on the anniversary of mother's death, I can not restrain the tears as the tender affections all crowd about the memory of mother. Let me beg of you, my dear friend, love your mother with all the devotion of your nature while you have her. Throw your arms about her neck and live over those happy days again. Crawl up into her lap — *she* won't think it childish even if you are a big girl now. Sit down and smooth the wrinkles on her forehead.

And in later years what a remarkable influence the memory of mother can exert. Her picture upon my desk keeps ever young the associations with my dear old mother. A memory ring, which I wear, has often restrained me. So much for the power or mother's love.

As a prattling child, neither of us knew the meaning of care or responsibility. Mother carried that, and however great our peril might be, we were never impressed with the sense of danger so long as mother was within hearing. What great trust and confidence we had in her as our guardian angel! So I am sure we can both look back and recall those happy days, and literally wish that Time could "make us a child again," not only for "to-night," but that we might make a fresh start. It isn't necessary to point out the mistakes we all make, as we review our crooked paths through life, and realize how this or that might have been different had mother continued our same confidant that she was in our infancy and innocence.

To-day, as I write this letter (on a day

of both happy and sad reflections), I can only recall one unkind act to my mother, and yet that one time might have been ten thousand times, because it stands before me whenever I think of mother. It was nothing but a smart remark that I made in the presence of other young people, and it has continued to smart in my conscience through nearly thirty years since. But mother soon forgot it, I am sure, and never held it against me.

Then I think of a class that deserves our deepest consideration and most careful study. There is an army of young people, boys and girls, who are early thrown out in the cold world. For them life is often an uneven struggle and many times the cold world gets the better of them, and they find an early relief in death. But there are others who will struggle bravely on and manifest a determination to live a true life, and be useful as far as they can. It is no easy matter for a young girl in the city, who is deprived of the companionship, comfort and sympathy of mother, to face the indifferent world, and be able to carry her head erect.

Especially is this true with many who are thrown into the city, where all forms of temptation are placed before them. And how often we who are engaged in business activities allow ourselves to be blinded by our slavish devotion to business and fail to realize that we owe a duty to this class of workers, who are craving for sympathy, who are yearning for the touch of a hand that would give them encouragement and make them feel that they are human and not menial.

I could tell more than I can properly write in a letter of this character.

I believe, further, that if business men would concern themselves more about their employees, that they would be better able to extend sympathy, and more than that, to offer words of encouragement, or even make suggestions that would help their employees in all those pursuits of life that will enlarge their usefulness and increase their opportunities for doing good.

If they can not be mother to the girl or boy, they could at least take the father's place.

How happy we both are in the contem-

plation of a good mother, and to each of us mother is the dearest creature alive. And oh! if we all could have learned in our younger years to have regarded her as such, and given her our confidence, and courted her counsel, where we blunderingly followed our own inclinations, or were led by those whose hearts were like our own. It is useless now to weep over those mistakes, but we can, by our experiences, keep others from the snare. And if we had our pinions broken so that we can not mount as high again, we can help others, and encourage them with all the power of our natures to make mother their first and only confidant. We may have good friends, and strong friends, but none that will ever have the interest in us that mother had. Our closest friends may often be influenced by selfish motives, whereas, mother's generous nature will consider only our highest and best good.

To you and to me mother will never die. She may be taken from us, her work may be finished and the Master call her home, but there will be no word in all the known lan-

guages that will quicken the heart and revive the tenderest associations of life like the word mother. We may be "down and out," but if we hear a song like "Home, Sweet Home," how the tears crowd to our eyes, and all the mistakes of our life flash before us. How we feel then, like the prodigal son, and wish we could "arise and go" to our mother. And how often are men and women of good heart kept down by the contemplation of a wasted life, thinking they can not stem the flood of public contempt and face the world again. Only this week did I read of a gifted poet in England who has given to the world of letters some of the best and purest sentiment ever worded, and yet in an hour of bitter and stinging revenge a political enemy searched out his early history, and found that twenty years before he had been an outcast. Yet this same man, with nobility of purpose and knowing his own powers, withdrew from the world for ten years, thinking he would be forgotten, and then came forth with his literary genius, expecting the world to receive him for the

true worth within him. Twenty years had not sufficed for hard-hearted people to overlook his record.

The hope that springs eternal in the human breast doubtless put new purpose into his blasted life, and the thoughts of mother, and his desire to honor her, are accountable for his eagerness to let the world know what he could do. One thing is sure, his mother would never forsake him, whether he be forty or sixty years of age. If she still lives, he knows that he has her sympathy and the comfort that only a mother's words can give.

WOMAN'S INFLUENCE.

WOMAN'S INFLUENCE.

A woman can either make or break a man. If the women of our land realized the power they have through their influence over man, this would be a different nation. Woman's power over man was shown in the very beginning of the human family, when Eve tempted Adam and he willingly yielded, prompted, as many are to-day, with the desire to please her. She led to his downfall, as many Eves of to-day cause the downfall of others.

I will not take time to tell of the evil that women can do, but rather to point out the good they can accomplish through their properly-directed influence. A gifted writer has truly expressed it:

"Though she leads him, yet she follows."

The poet sings of her devotion and the artist raves over her beauty, but devotion and beauty are nothing if woman fails to realize her power to sway man for good. Far greater than the kings of the earth is the woman who will use her influence for good; to the eleva-

tion, encouragement and help of man. When a woman knows that she possesses this influence, it is her God-given duty to use it for the benefit of the human family. A man who is fortunate enough to have the daily companionship of a woman of good and pure mind is blessed of all men. He is happy in pleasing her, because he knows her purposes are good. He seeks her counsel, because he has learned there is wisdom therein. He subjects himself to her in the recognition of her mastery over him, that mastery that reduces him to a mere slave, as it were, by virtue of her clear perception and ability to direct his course. The Good Book tells us that the minds of men are desperately wicked, and most men could, at some period of their life, be easily led into evil ways by weak women.

Solomon asked the question, "Who can find a virtuous woman?" The English there is misleading. The language originally meant, "Who can find a strong woman?" having reference to strength of character, one of courage and conviction; and such, Solomon says, are worth more than rubies. A man who cor-

rectly appreciates a good woman is glad to be associated with her, and is not ashamed of the influence of such a woman. Many a man has been saved and made useful because of the fact that he had a woman of strength and character to direct his life. It is not weakness on the part of a man to admit that woman is his helper. It doesn't indicate that his mind is weaker than hers, if he finds pleasure and wisdom in her counsel.

God has made this world, as it were, a beautiful garden, and has placed us all here to help tend it. He has given to every one of us a part to perform. There are some things that are strong and majestic in their full growth. There are other things that are weak and tender. Man may stand forth in this garden like the mighty giants of the forest, useful and necessary because of their strength; the woman by her tenderness and gentleness, filling her place, and necessary to adorn and give brilliance to this great garden,

"Useless each without the other."

I believe that you realize, then, the power of woman's influence. I am sure your life

has exerted an influence over others. The amount of good you can accomplish is only measured by your desire and determination to continue to exert this influence. Far better is it for you to use it where it has proven it has power than to divert it and lose the influence you have once possessed.

You may sometimes wonder whether your life has possessed an influence. You can answer that question. My words above answer the question. You have an influence, though in despondent moments you may feel your life has been a burden or a wreck, but rid your mind of such a delusion. I could testify to the influence that you have exerted over at least one life. That influence has been good. It has been helpful. It has been appreciated. You know a life that has been directed to the alleviation of suffering. You know a life that has become interested in the unfortunate. You know a life that has learned the strength of a kind word spoken, the thrill that comes from personal contact, the comfort that comes at night in knowing that some one has been helped or cheered during that day.

You know the person that has exerted that influence. And what one woman has accomplished, other women can do. And if the women of our land would awaken to the great power they possess in suggesting things that make men act, in abetting projects that cleanse society, they could drive out much of the sin that saturates the world to-day. Men love a pure influence. They love the encouragement of those whom, if they prove worthy, they adore. Nor is this adoration sentimental gush or superciliousness, but it is the sober, sensible impression of clean-faced and pure-minded men.

The vase of flowers that adorns your table is silent in its influence, but nevertheless forceful. Their very presence suggests purity, delicacy, refinement; all the power and mysterious handiwork of the great Masterhand is in every atom of their dainty structure. Their influence is irresistible. So, also, is the influence of a good woman. She need not be perfect; few flowers are; but the fragrance she exudes and the tender sympathy she reflects is an influence that is measured only by eternity.

A LIGHT IN THE WINDOW.

A LIGHT IN THE WINDOW.

This is a familiar expression that we have all heard, associated with one who had gone from home and never been heard from. I recently saw this "light in the window" in reality on a trip I made far into the country. In passing by a certain house one night after meeting, I noticed the light by the front window of the house, and casually remarked, "That looks like a light in the window for some one." They told me, "Yes, that is the truth. That is just what it is." They then told me the circumstances that brought about that sad condition in that home. A young man, an only son, had gone from home some months before. There had been some disagreement between the son and the parents, and the son, in a spell of bitterness, had left the home and never been heard from. The poor mother had hoped from day to day that her son would get over his stubbornness and return home; but as days passed, and then weeks, she began to despair. Of course, the

separation only caused her heart to grow fonder, and she began putting the lamp by the front window, so that if her boy ever did come near the house, he could feel that there was a welcome for him from the light in the window, placed there to draw his steps homeward.

How often have we, in our impulsive nature, questioned the wisdom of our father and mother? How often have we rebelled against their authority? How often have we felt that our own judgment was superior to theirs? We all pass through that stage when we think we know more than our parents ever knew; but what an awful awakening it is when, in later years, we discover that, after all, father and mother knew best. And how many there are, who admit this fact, who have not the courage to go back and ask the forgiveness of the old folks, and give them the affection that their hearts crave. Many a man and woman has knowingly shortened the life of their parents by their conduct toward them and their treatment of them. While this is true on

the part of wayward and spoiled children, it is a comfort to know that the love of mother never changes. Her heart yearns for her wayward boy, and even though he may be an admitted criminal, and guilty of the most heinous crime in the history of desperate characters, yet that mother's love remains supreme. All others may forsake him, but mother never does, and however bad he may have been, she can tell something good in his nature.

And so this young man was not forgotten by his mother. He may be somewhere near, or he may be on the far side of the world, and yet in his selfish nature he will oftentimes wonder why the folks don't send word to him if they want him to come home, blinding himself to the fact that they have no way of knowing where he is. But if he would come home, it wouldn't take the neighbors long to tell him that mother has faithfully kept the light in the window for him. He doesn't realize how much sorrow he has brought into her life, how wretched he has made every day of her life, and his own, too. In his deter-

mination he justifies his conduct on the ground that they were older and should have manifested a different spirit. He was blind at that time, and will not let his mind be enlightened now. He refuses to admit that what they did was for his own good.

Some day he will come to his senses. Perhaps when mother has passed her threescore-and-ten he will be drawn homeward, curious to know if the old folks are still alive. He may learn of his mother's sickness. Then his heart will be touched, and he will hurry to her side, and there will be the greeting that has been so long delayed. Then for a few short days, perhaps, he will give her the affection that her poor old stricken heart has yearned for all these years. Then he will realize what a fool he has been. Then he will plead for her forgiveness; when she is no longer able to do for her boy the things that a fond mother finds pleasure in doing. She will be laid away, and he will then be crushed in spirit, and his life be made a sad one in contemplating the great injustice he

has practiced upon his mother during all these years. He will become one of the gloomy class, of whom the world has so many. His children, if he has any, will be morose. They will be sad of spirit, irritable, and have few playmates, all because their father didn't know his best friend when he had her, and refused to search for the light in the window.

Oh, these stubborn hearts of ours! If we could only conquer them, how much sorrow we could save! There are some who are not able to distinguish between stubbornness and will power. We all admire a person of strong character and of a determined spirit, yet a determined spirit, if it be not influenced and directed by intelligent action, is pure stubbornness. That boy that tries to feel justified every day that he has done the right thing, that he has acted the manly part, that he has rebelled against injustice — if he could only see his mother's bent form, her worried, anxious features, and could be made to feel that he had been largely responsible for her feeble condition, he would, perhaps, come to his

senses, and hasten to her side to help support her and sustain her in her declining years, and be the affectionate comforter to her that every appreciative son should be. He does not stop to think that every day he is acting the stubborn part, he is adding gray hairs to her head and quickening her heart-throbs, because of her constant daily prayer and worry as to where her wandering boy may be.

And then there are the prodigal girls. Oh, who will speak a word for them and make them feel like there is a light in the window also for them, if they will only return to their home and loved ones? Just now I am reminded of a dear Christian woman who recently wrote to me with the request that I search for her granddaughter, who left home, and who was keeping them all in ignorance of her whereabouts or conduct. In her letters to me the grandmother said that the child had everything at home that her heart could desire, but was simply of a wayward disposition, having a desire to be where there was excitement, and things that entertained and

pleased her childish fancies. She was soon picked up by one of those charlatans who are always on the lookout for easy prey. That girl may think that she has discovered the secret of true happiness in this life, but, oh, what a remorse will come to her in the morning of realization, when she learns, as she can not now see, that home was the dearest and safest place in the world for her. When the afterthoughts come to her, will she have the courage to go back to the old folks, or will she feel that she is disgraced and will no longer be received by them? How little she judges mother's love if she thinks thus.

Then there are the neighbors and her former associates — how will they receive her? These questions all occur to her anxious mind, and she may feel that the only course for her to follow is the one which she has so sadly entered. Is not a wayward daughter just as precious in the sight of heaven and mother? Then why not put forth the effort for their reclamation that we make on behalf of the boy? Why should we not be as willing and

as ready to give the helping hand to one who has been unfortunate or misguided, but who in true penitence desires to do that which is honorable and noble? Oh, that our women's clubs and other organizations would interest themselves in this great work!

"OH, BUT I PROMISED TO HELP YOU."

"OH, BUT I PROMISED TO HELP YOU."

From infancy to old age there is a human craving for companionship. The child that is raised alone does not become the unselfish man or woman that it would if it had other children to play with. An adult whose life has been one of isolation is generally unhappy in disposition and uncongenial in association. The greatest and most telling works in life are the result of friendly counsel. Few men or women have the determination that will carry any project through without the encouragement of a kindred mind. The man who spurns the companionship of others is a bore. The woman who claims to prefer to seclude herself is unnatural. The child who avoids the association of other children needs careful watching to discover the cause.

You know full well the meaning of the words that I have used as the subject of this letter. I know what it means, when planning some new or enlarged work that almost dis-

couraged me to think of, to have some one say, "Oh, but I will help you." That's different. What a new aspect it places on matters and projects when you are assured by an interested friend that he will help you! You have doubtless noticed that the most effective work along many lines is accomplished through united effort. Just one night this week I was out with a friend on some reform work when he dropped the remark that two persons could carry on the work so much more effectively than one, because two could go into places of any character without suffering or endangering their reputations, which might not be possible, or excusable, in the minds of some who would criticise individual effort.

A man backed up with the devotion of a brave wife has no fears in going to the frontier and braving all the terrors and rough experiences of pioneer life. She would shrink from it with horror if suggested as an individual undertaking; likewise the man, because his nature is such that he desires companionship and encouragement. It is not always the exact amount of actual help rendered that

accomplishes the end, but simply the assurance that some one stands back of you, or watches you, and says as plainly as words could say it, "Go ahead and I will help you all I can." The apostles who accomplished the marvelous work in the first century always went "two and two." The wisdom of this is at once recognized. One could encourage the other, and they would have no sense of fear under any trial of faith as they would if left alone. I do really believe that Peter would not have denied his Savior if one of the apostles had been with him, so that he would not have felt that he was literally left alone; if Mark could have whispered to him at the critical time, "Deny not your Lord, for I will stand by you and he will stand by us."

This old world is constructed along wrong lines, or, more correctly, has become perverted in its judgment of the human family. What a different world this would be if there could be the freedom of approach that we admire in children! A family moves into the house next door with a little boy or five. The little boy in your house has picked up an acquaint-

ance with him before the furniture is removed from the wagon. They know all about each other, and some more things, at the end of a half hour's acquaintance. Each knows just how many marbles, strings, jacks, wagons and a score more articles the other has. Apply their freedom to society as it is and what a horrified condition would result! We meet neighbors and people in business day after day, year after year. They are never spoken to and barely glanced at. We pass and repass each other and no words or glances are exchanged. We act as though we regarded every other being as a suspicious character, and we are going to treat him as though he were actually dishonest until he has an opportunity to prove that he is in every way our equal. This is all wrong. It is a perversion of the divine plan and fortunately is not universal. But what a different world this would be if we could all feel, regarding each other, that we are here for the purpose of helping; that our success in life is not measured by the accumulation of land, houses or money; that our real success through life is rather to be

measured in the number we have helped, the encouragement we have given, the sympathy we have extended; and we would, indeed, believe that we were witnessing the beginning of the divine reign if all mankind would feel and act with this question uppermost in their minds: "How can I help you?"

You look about you and what do you see? A great mass of men and women taxing their energies, bringing on nervous exhaustion, hustling, bustling, crowding, crushing, elbowing each other out of the way. No time to stop and consider, "Whither goest thou?" but all possessed of a mad, uncontrollable mania for the almighty dollar, which in the end brings only disappointment, wrecked health, and a few languishing years of vain regret for having lost sight of the real purpose of life. Why not, therefore, encourage one another that we may be more helpful? Why should I not feel, if I engage myself to a business house, that I am there, not for the amount of salary I may earn only, but above that should be the thought, "How much help can I be to the house?" The same idea should impel us

in our work, that makes it a joy for the housewife to patiently, and almost unknown, discharge the duties of her household that her husband may be encouraged in his life pursuit.

One has the ability to look ahead and plan his life, whatever choice he may make.

NOBODY CARES.

NOBODY CARES.

It always produces a feeling of sadness when I hear the expression, "Nobody cares." My observation leads me to say that only a person who has become heavily discouraged can allow himself to use those words.

I believe that girls and women are more inclined to give way to their feelings than boys or men. The latter seem to be able to maintain an independence, or a disposition to face the world, and take things as they come. Girls are not so constituted. They take everything more seriously, and are more visibly impressed with treatment or experiences that the sterner sex would laugh at and forget. Knowing the nature of the gentler sex as I do, I can in a degree sympathize with them when they feel that nobody cares for them.

One way in which to discover our many blessings is to look about us and see the large number, perhaps of our own relations, who are far worse off than we are; worse off in opportunity for doing good, worse off finan-

cially, worse off in general appearance, and all because we have learned through sufficient experience to know how to handle discouragements when we meet them. No one is free from knocks, but the strongest characters are those who can wave them aside, or close their eyes as to so much dust blown in the face. Nobody cares for a weak person except to pity him, but this weakness can only be overcome by rising superior to surroundings and bravely meeting the rough experiences of life.

There is no character, however grand we may now consider it, but what has its scars, the result of rough handling and battling. Nature teaches this. The plants that are raised in the hothouse can not endure the winds or the storms, nor the drought of the summer. They have been petted and their constitutions weakened because of not being required to endure exposure. But the plants that grow in the hothouse are not admired or appreciated for their sturdy qualities. We can enjoy the beauty and fragrance of the rose, but we admire the strength and majesty of the storm-tested oak. And so our characters

are made worthy of emulation because of the experiences that perfect us. No true character is free from experiences that one would want repeated. There are bad spots in every life if we look for them, but we make a serious mistake if we spend our time recalling the details of the past, or grieving over things we have done. The spirit of the times is to forget the things that are past. Paul, the inspired apostle, urges us to press forward — forget the things that are behind. And it is fortunate that in the hurry and unrest of the world things are soon forgotten; and even lives that have been misdirected are soon covered up with the good deeds that we now know how to do.

You are familiar with the events in the life of St. Peter, how he even denied having been with his Master. If any one could say, after his cowardly betrayal, that "nobody cares for me," Peter could. But the Savior did not lose sight of the real worth of the man, and he became, afterward, one of the most fearless defenders of the gospel. And we charitably forget his weaknesses and are strengthened,

ourselves, by the nobility of character that he exhibited after the death of his Savior.

But to speak more directly and with an every-day bearing, I want to say that young people should never give way to "the blues."

I meet a hideous character on the street dragging an old box. He has been about the city for years. He will take that box to a saloon and trade it for a drink. I go a little further up the street and meet a miserable-looking object that may have been regarded at one time as a lady. It is as much as I can do now to even call her a woman. She is not over forty in actual years, yet her features have the furrows of a person of eighty. She is a hideous, disgusting object, whose daily experience is deepest sin and constant debauchery. I don't believe that the strains of "Home, Sweet Home," or the innocent touch or angelic smile of a babe could bring a tear to their hardened eyes. If there are such in this world who could truly say "Nobody cares for me," I might permit myself to think these tell the truth. But such hardened sinners are not the kind to waste our time with. We

meet those of our own age and condition who are poor in spirit, weak in faith in themselves and in God, who have perhaps not had the comfort and sympathy of an interested mother. There are so many in our big cities who literally crave sympathy. Girls who are alone, bravely trying to do good and to be good against almost overwhelming odds. Boys who are easily sidetracked by thoughtless and short-sighted associates. And so to all of us life is a very serious proposition.

But I do believe, judging from my own experience, that there isn't a person on earth who is making an honest effort but who will find a kindred spirit ready to not only listen to and sympathize with, but also to help him. I have had persons, in whom I have had no personal interest, come to me and desire my advice, consulting with me on most every subject under the sun, who would apologize for their coming and excuse themselves with the statement that they knew I would keep their confidence and advise them for the best. On numerous occasions I have laid aside my own work, busy as I was, listening to their stories

and then advising them as best I could, and glad to know that my counsel was appreciated and glad to know that I could be a help to some one who did not know which way to turn. There are others who could be helpful in this particular line. Many business men, if they would not appear so cold and distant, could be a great help to their young employees if the latter felt free to approach them; and I believe that many a young life could be saved or its future course changed if there had come the wholesome, helpful influence at a time when it was yearned for. But the fear of being misjudged has, doubtless, deterred many from seeking that counsel, which might mean the turning point in a life.

Early impressions have much to do with our course of life. How grand it is to look back to the old home with the mental picture of father, mother, and our brothers and sisters, all gathered together in the big old living room, where we spent our evenings. The children worked on their lessons or played innocent games; the mother at her sewing, and the father busy with his reading and

writing. No matter where we go, we recall these early impressions, and if they have been happy they exert a restraining influence. As a boy who was early thrown out in the world, I am proud to say that I could never yield myself to anything that would bring reproach upon the rest of the family, because of these early impressions.

Wherever I may go, whatever my condition may become, however advanced in years, I know I can never truthfully say that "nobody cares for me." And you will always feel that there are those who care for you; and so can all who, by upright lives, prove themselves worthy of thought and care.

LIVING, BUT USELESS.

LIVING, BUT USELESS.

I received a letter some time ago from one of the noblest Christians it has been my happiness to know. I have received letters from him at regular intervals for years. In the letter referred to he used an expression that fixed itself in my mind, and which I have many times recalled. This good brother had been for years an active preacher of the gospel, and when, through physical infirmities, he began to show approaching change, it greatly distressed him. With a mind as clear and keen as ever given to mortal, his thoughts even enlarged and wrought stronger expression under his restrained opportunities for active service. Later, when a partial stroke of paralysis further interfered with his activities, his despair was almost painful. In his many letters he often referred to his enforced idleness, yet not with the thought of complaining. His one desire was that he might get about with his accustomed freedom and preach the gospel. In this service was supreme hap-

piness. When he fully realized that his paralysis had rendered him helpless, and that his condition was a reality and not a dream, he adjusted himself to his changed condition and began to write with an acuteness and force that he had never displayed in that line. His mind seemed to take on new life, supplemented, doubtless, by the enforced inactivities of his body, and the best products of his mind were those of his last years.

The expression that he used and which impressed me was this: "I am living, but useless."

Poor old man! Grand old man! How he unwittingly misjudged both his friends and his family. Why should he regard himself as an incumbrance upon his family and the church because the Lord had enfeebled him in order to more fully develop other activities? You have known such a grand old man, and have known that such a life can be a daily blessing to those with whom associated. And so it was with this man of God. To-day I picked up a letter written by one of his children six months after his death, and as I read

it I can hardly restrain the tears. Having known this man personally for many years in his home life and in his public life and under many trying conditions, I am competent to judge as to the value of his life to the world. And I know what a joy and comfort it must be to his loved ones to-day that he lived a life absolutely free from even the faintest suspicion of wrong. How few are there to-day who can occupy public positions and be free from the wagging tongues and scandal mongers that infest society. But this good man, thanks to his wise judgment and his daily communion with God, was able to live in all good conscience before God and man.

Living, but useless! Judge you as to whether he was considered useless by those in his own home. Judge you, could one who had been a part of your every-day life ever be regarded by you as useless? Judge you, could the one who had given you being, no matter how helpless his condition, ever be regarded by you as useless? Judge you, could your own mother, who had suffered more for your sake than you have ever known, ever be

looked upon by you as "living, but useless"? Your natural affection and devotion resents such suggestion. How pleasant it is for you to perform hard labors for one you truly love! And how the members of this family, of whom this grand man was the head, would vie with each other in their eagerness to care for their helpless father and make his last days comfortable. And how we all counter-depend on each other; no one lives unto himself. But life is made endurable and happy with the knowledge that some unconscious influence or personality is a daily incentive to nobler living.

This grand man has been laid to rest, but his life goes on. His faithful wife (for whom he worried lest she should be left alone) and his devoted children now reach in vain for the vanished hand and listen for the sound of his voice that is stilled. Useless? When his life has led thousands of others to know the true way of life? Useless? When his fatherly counsel has helped to lift the burden from hundreds who were discouraged? Useless? When his very presence has brought

joy and happiness into the hearts and lives of those with whom he mingled? Useless? When his life and teaching have raised a family who now rise up and call him blessed, and who rejoice in having had a father who gave himself absolutely to the service of his Master, even though in his last day he had hardly a place he could call his own?

No, my friend, no life is useless, although handicapped by enforced idleness, which causes others to think beautiful thoughts; which causes others to imitate the divine life; which causes others to have that sympathy, that charity, which makes the world better for having lived in it. Money can not take the place of heart throbs nor can wealth buy personal presence.

The time will come when dark shadows will cross the door of your life and mine; when there will seem to be crushed out all in this life that was precious. The sun may shine forth in all of its power and radiance, and the moon may send down clear, mellow beams, and yet shadows will come to our lives that will darken these brightest days. They will

settle down upon us as a pall and fill our lives with sorrow, and life's greatest sorrow to us may be the departure of one whose life had become "living, but useless." There will come times when we will gather about the form of one who has been life itself to us, and we will look down into that cold, wrinkled face, and yet will see lines of beauty that had become almost lost to us. We may see scars that will recall some pain endured for us. We will see gray and whitened hair that may have been hastened in its change by our conduct, and yet we will see a peace and resignation, yes, hallowed sympathy, expressed on these features indicative of that love that lips could not utter and pen could not indite. It may be that then, and not until then, will we fully realize the actual daily strength we have derived from one who was "living, but useless."

May your last hour and mine be as happy as was that of this godly man of whom I write. His one great wish was that he might die on the arms of his son, who had been privileged to be near him in his last days, and

who was given strength to lift and lay him in his bed day by day. This last wish was granted, and with his heart-strings around him in life, his eyes set upon him in death, and resting upon his strong arm, and in the presence of his aged, heart-broken companion standing by, he passed beyond the river.

A QUARTER OF A CENTURY.

A QUARTER OF A CENTURY.

I shall never forget the deep study that came over you when I casually remarked, on the completion of your twenty-fifth milestone, that you had lived a quarter of a century. For some minutes you seemed overwhelmed in thought, and when you did break the silence it was with a sigh of regret that you realized you had accomplished so little in the years you had lived. I think my use of the term, "a century," also added somewhat to the seriousness of your thoughts, realizing, doubtless, that three-fourths of a century would be as much as you could hope to remain here, and that one-third of your natural life was already completed.

> Come, gone, gone forever,
> Gone as an unreturning river,
> To-morrow, to-day, yesterday, never,
> Gone once for all.

Birthdays measure off regular periods of time and suggest to us the practical questions as we look back, "What has this last year

done for me?" and, "What have I done for my fellow man?" Unless a person can feel that each year has brought him a little farther on his way to heaven, and brought some sunshine or help into at least one other life, then he can really feel that his life has been empty for that year. It is not the number of years we live that constitutes our service to society, but how have we lived them. A few short years actively spent in the service of God are worth more on the great day of judgment than eighty years spent without hope and without God in the world. One is full of promise, the other offers nothing. The Savior himself was active for only three years, and his earthly work finished when he was barely thirty-three years old. His life was intensely active.

We are all indifferent to the real seriousness of life until we have passed the quarter-century post in the journey through life, and perhaps it is just as well that our childhood, youth and young womanhood or manhood is free from positive burdens to us. The obligations of life force themselves on us soon

enough, so that I believe we are better fitted for the responsibilities of later years by enjoying properly the freedom from worry and burdens that goes with our younger days. And I believe we can all accomplish more in the way of a useful life-work after we have passed the twenty-fifth or even the thirty-fifth mile-post if we can look back to happy days that have helped to fit us, physically and mentally, for the life-work before us.

What shall the second quarter of a century produce? It will find you further than to-day, for if you have ever had the poetic idea that life is beauty, you have long since learned that life is indeed duty.

> "How noiseless fall the feet of time,
> That only tread on flowers."

And I am sure that the footprints that have helped to lead you or direct your course will also be in the direction that your impressions will lead others in wisdom's ways. During the second quarter are to be brought out the fruits of all those noble traits that have been instilled or planted in your heart and mind in the first quarter. This second stage will

determine whether your life, or mine, or any life, will have been a success. Judging by your power to impress or lead others during this period, we will witness the realization of those ideals that have been objects of your younger fancy, and I am sure it will prove most interesting, even if disheartening, to measure the pet ideals by their present realization.

I remember a venerable doctor saying to me at one time that the heaviest sorrows that come in life are gradually forgotten in the activities and duties of succeeding years. I have learned to know the truth of his statement. I am sure it is well for us that we can rid ourselves of the past by the contemplation of the present and future. It is a happy condition that we are thus enabled, for the sake of others, to

> "Ring out old shapes of foul disease,
> Ring in the thousand years of peace."

The vast majority of our population are pleasure seekers. The prosperity of our nation has ruined many lives. A good taste of the hardships of the pioneers would have a whole-

some effect on the general character of our people and the generations to come. We have become too much self-satisfied; and because of the present ease with which any worthy person can obtain remunerative employment, we live too much at our ease and do not manifest enough of the spirit of sacrifice or concern for others; or what is still more important, the development of the best that is within us. I could name a score of persons, who are also known to you, who could have accomplished far more in this world if they had been early and properly imbued with that idea. But their easy-going parents, some of whom we have heard remark that they didn't want their children to endure the hardships they had, have permitted them to live mainly for the pleasures in life. Many of them will not be any further along, intellectually, spiritually, morally or financially, at the end of their second twenty-fifth year than they were at the end of the first.

We, however, who have learned to appreciate the value of time, and who are, in a degree, awake to the opportunities before us,

do not measure time by the personal pleasure derived, the number of years lived, the amount of cash piled up, but rather by the opportunities for usefulness, the heavy hearts made lighter, the sympathetic hand extended, and the thoughts and feelings created in the minds of those who needed our help. The poet concisely states it in these familiar lines:

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feel the noblest, acts the best."

Life is compared to a flowing stream. We stand upon its brink, and when we glide out, will it be in peace down death's mysterious stream, and will we be able to say we have done well? This all depends upon ourselves. There have been times when we have felt overwhelmed. At such times many quit the race, but we dare not do it. The responsibilities of this present life, the judgment in the life to come, compel us to put forth the effort that we may do our best, not alone for ourselves and the ones we love, but for society itself, and those who are to follow us. If we,

through this second period of life, can merit the commendation of our own conscience, if we by unfaltering trust can turn our eyes heavenward and ask God's help a little longer, then we should be entitled to a relaxation and retrospection of the fifty years we have lived, working forward to the quiet, serene enjoyment that should be the portion of every useful, active life.

SACRIFICING FOR OTHERS.

SACRIFICING FOR OTHERS.

So many words have been perverted from their primary meaning that we often do violence to their original strength and purity by our free use of them. The term "sacrifice" should really be applied only to things that are holy, having reference in particular to things offered as acts of worship.

Howsoever, I am using the term in its common acceptation, and when I speak of sacrificing for others, I shall refer to those special services that we render to others out of deep solicitude or love.

There is no genuine sacrifice if not prompted from love, and it only becomes a sacrifice if we give up something that we ourselves feel we really need. Duty is not always sacrifice, yet much sacrifice may be required in the reasonable discharge of duty. The true mother, for her invalid child, sacrifices all her personal or social inclinations. The husband, for his afflicted wife, quietly abandons his childhood and life-long ambitions, that he

may devote himself in faithful attention to his wife. The "rainy-day" nest egg, that he has worked so hard to accumulate, rapidly disappears in his unceasing efforts to provide comforts and relief for her. The spark of hope never dies out while life remains. These are sacrifices that duty requires, but it is duty cheerfully performed, because love is the motive.

Many sacrifices are made unconsciously from pure promptings of duty or from the realization of another's danger. A policeman springs at the runaway or snatches a child from under the car wheels. The mother dashes into the burning building to get her babe. The fireman scales the ladder to bring down some terrified woman. The engineer acts with amazing alacrity to set the air brake and reverse his engine to avert a collision — all of them unconscious of doing anything unusual or heroic.

But many of us, as friends, perform service for others, which service closely borders on sacrifice. Perhaps you know something of the inward comfort enjoyed in giving of

your hard-earned money for the daily needs of some worthy widow. Perhaps you have given up some social engagement to spend an hour or a half day with some afflicted friend. Perhaps duty to any given service has deprived you of some greater opportunity in other fields of usefulness. Perhaps some work that appeals to you as righteous and needful satisfies you more than greater remuneration that other work would bring you. But in any of these positions I am sure you have enjoyed still greater satisfaction in knowing that your sacrifices have been made without expecting the recognition or plaudits of the observing world. How often do we meet friends and remark, "Seems strange she doesn't dress better — she gets a good salary," or, "I wonder why George doesn't spend more money on himself." The truth is, if we knew the facts we might find that the former was helping the folks at home to pay off the mortgage, or to send a younger sister to school. And our friend George may be paying off a debt contracted by some distant relative, and his sense of honor and

his nobility force him to wipe out this stain against the family name.

We must distinguish between true sacrifice and assumed martyrdom. The mere giving up of something for the sake of peace, or to avoid controversy or unpleasantness, is not sacrifice. Unless the heart voluntarily prompts the act, it is lacking in the necessary spiritual character, and I do not believe it gives any comfort to either the bestower or the recipient. There must be the impelling devotion or the recognition of worth to make the sacrifice a happy bestowal. There must be spirit back of it, like that possessed by that noble Southern Senator, of whom you read not long ago, who, in order to save the life of his wife, eagerly gave up a quart of his own life-blood, and at the risk of his life, that it might be transfused into the veins of his wife and retsore her depleted vitality.

The Good Book is full of examples of even stronger love than this. The test that was put to Abraham when the Lord required the life of his son Isaac as a living sacrifice found a ready response in the conduct of Abraham

out of love and honor for Jehovah. The greater sacrifice of Christ for the world is the most powerful illustration in all history. These others made sacrifices for those where there was reciprocal love, but Christ became a sacrifice for those who hated him.

The missionary who goes into the foreign country, thousands of miles from his home folks, possesses as strong a spirit of sacrifice as we can behold to-day. The farewell reception, the handclasps and caresses all around, do not mean so much to those who remain at home with friends and dear ones; but to the one who is crossing the great ferry, with no certainty of ever seeing the home folks this side of eternity, it means more than words can express. The possibility of foreign outbreak, heathen persecution, sudden murders, famine, pestilence — all of these must be thought of when the missionary and his faithful wife, with suppressed emotion, bid farewell to home and native land. All honor to these heralds of the cross! And yet we sometimes hear people disparage the work of the missionary; that they "are well paid," "live on

the fat of the land," "have nice trips across the water every few years;" and they try to make you feel they are doing more than should be expected of them, if they can be made to part with a dollar a year for the help of these soul-savers.

All honor to the missionaries of the cross!

IT MIGHT BE WORSE.

IT MIGHT BE WORSE.

The other day I was thinking of my own troubles and decided that I had a tremendous load of them. Then I thought about the many poor fellows who have things a thousand times worse than I do, and I told myself to keep quiet and quit kicking. I named over many of my associates of the past, and I really could not recall one of them that I would change places with to-day. One of them, who had started out full of hope and promise, had moved about seven times, lost his job three times, lived in five different towns, and his wife looks fifteen years older than she really is. Another had married, and at the age of thirty-two had a family of six children to provide for. Two others who had graduated in my class had married and moved to a little country town, and were lost sight of to the world. Another has a good position as a drummer, but is away from his wife and family more than half of the time. And so on among my whole list of old friends. Here

I am blessed with all that any young person could desire. I don't have everything I want, nor as much as I want, but perhaps all that I need and all I can fully enjoy; and I occupy a position where I can be useful in the world. And, after all, our real value to a community is not restricted to one's self or one's household, but to society in general; and if we are blessed with good health and enjoy the companionship of those who have proven themselves worthy of our respect and affection, what more can we desire? I appreciate fully the blessings and the opportunities God has placed within my reach. I know from your experience that you also are appreciative, and it is fortunate for us that we can find so many things to be truly thankful for.

I have made visits to the homes of the unfortunate poor, where there was perfect content. I have had access to the mansions of the rich, where there is evident discontent. Poverty is not a synonym for misery, neither is wealth a guarantee of happiness. Sin or virtue are not confined to any class or condition. They are found among the rich and

poor alike. Sin may be given a cloak of refinement and thrive in gilded palaces; or it may exist amid coarseness and depravity. Whereas virtue, which really means "strong character," is often found in the poorest homes, where love reigns and contented hearts are housed. Poverty alone is not a disgrace, nor is wealth a cynosure of righteousness.

The ability to rise above one's environment I think I have emphasized in another letter, and the philosophy that teaches us by experience that things might be worse is wholesome. We might be sometimes thoughtless and forgetful and find ourselves murmuring and complaining, when we really should be lifting our hearts in thanksgiving that things are not worse, and in gratitude that there are others, who are apparently contented, who are worse off than we are. We can both appreciate the wisdom of Paul's philosophy when he said that in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content. Only a Christian can believe this and live it, and this is made possible solely from the love that flows from heart to heart — not the gushing

sentimental effusions that the poets write about, but the deep-seated, genuine, friendly affection that binds one to another with "hooks of steel"; and to take love out of hearts and lives would be like taking Christ from the Bible. There would be nothing left worth while; nothing in life to cling to; no anchor for the soul. So long as such affection is received, appreciated and reciprocated, there is no misgiving as to the real pleasures and purposes in life.

There are many who could be helped to something better by a little thought and personal interest on our part. We become so habituated to "looking out for number one" that the proverb is a part of our daily life. It is almost a revival of the false idea of the "survival of the fittest."

The thought that "it might be worse" has encouraged many a young persen to put forth greater effort that he may do better. At the same time the same thought has eased the conscience of the hardened criminal that his crime isn't as bad as some other criminal's. But we who are concerned about bringing

out the good in the human family must emphasize the duty of all toward the struggling man or woman who wants to rise above environment, forgetting the past, "the worst," and getting to the front with the best. There may be occasional riffles or even strong currents of severe trial, even physical distress, bodily hunger and actual poverty, yet, through all of this, if the individual is upheld by the hope that ever looks ahead, "sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust," he sees beyond this life and can even rejoice, though grievously afflicted or tormented, and say that "it is better further on," for "the sufferings of this present life are not to be compared to the glories that shall be revealed hereafter."

NEVER HAD A CHANCE.

NEVER HAD A CHANCE.

I remember the sentence from one of our school books, that all men are created free and equal. In theory they are, but in practice they are not. There are many in this hard old world who are creatures of conditions.

In the days when the framers of the American Constitution prepared that remarkable document conditions were such that a person could follow any chosen calling with the inward knowledge that he would be successful. To-day conditions are vastly different; the very best business men and the truest in all the walks of life may be crushed out by the overwhelming tyranny of a wealthy rival who has no soul.

If this could be true among men of sterling character and men of strong physical power, what can we expect to hope for those unfortunate ones whose unfavored situation or conditions may afford them no opportunity for being known and appreciated.

A working girl who has the advantage of

a home has an easy thing of it compared to one who is thrown early in life on her own resources. A strong boy thrown out in the world is tenfold better able to care for himself, and make his way, than a girl who came from the same home and is thrown on her own resources.

There is no reason why any boy or man with a good character and a fixed purpose in life can not accomplish any desired end within a few years. His ability and efficiency in his chosen avocation commands both patronage and recognition.

The unpolished boy from the hills will be known and recognized by his eloquence as a lawyer. The youth who comes from a little hamlet will be consulted when the advice of a surgeon is needed. But how about our girls; what show do they stand, especially in our reckless city life? The great wonder to me is that many of them turn out as well as they do.

One does not have to mingle with city people long to know some of the dangerous traps that befall the careless or weak ones;

and to my mind there is no person who deserves the affectionate consideration and the personal helping of the best men and women in our city more than the girl thrown on her own resources. And I believe I state the truth when I say that my own experience has demonstrated that there are thousands of good, worthy girls who have never had a fair chance in the world. And there are many working girls who are willing to take life easy, without any serious concern for life, either here or hereafter. These are to be the more pitied, but they will come to their senses sooner or later. But on behalf of those really noble ones, who want to be good and do good, I feel that I should speak words of encouragement. How can they be helped?

A young girl comes from the country to the city, charmed by the attraction of city life, with the impressions made that it must be fine to have nice clothes and to go out in the evenings. She may be fortunate in getting a boarding place with some nice family, who will try to give her some good advice. But, on the other hand, this good advice may be

wasted by her association with some new acquaintance; she may be thrown with some girl chum who will fill her curious mind with all sorts of stories of jolly city life. Such young and inexperienced girls become easy victims in the so-called merry whirl of life. The end of such a course is apparent to those experienced.

Perhaps, again, this same innocent girl may be appreciative of this good advice given her, and form those associations that will keep her from undesirable acquaintances and temptation, and live a life that will be a comfort to herself and a joy and satisfaction to her old folks at home.

But there is an ocean of young persons, boys and girls, whose hearts are as good as the Lord ever made them, whose eyes are as clear and as bright as good health can make them, whose conduct assures you that they want to be appreciated, and want to fill the proper sphere in life, who are anxious for good, honest work, free from evil association, and yet who, because of their unfavored situation, have never had a fair chance.

I call to mind one of the sweetest girls that I ever met, who was thrown out in the world at the age of fourteen, and yet whose early experience in married life has served to make her feel that all the world is one great deception, that men and women who are true in all the relations of life are few and far between; and yet I am positive, from my ability to study human nature, that this same girl would be one of the truest and noblest of earth if her life had been started differently, assisted by those who were true. Her noble womanly nature rebelled against the injustice of a shiftless husband, so she properly sought separation from him. While still merely a girl, she is left a widow with a sweet babe to care for. She did not have a fair chance to show to the world what she could have been as a wife, mother and neighbor; she must now fight the battles of life for herself, naturally wondering what there is ahead for her. Let us hope that she may profit by any past mistakes and be the happier in her future life, wherever and whatever it may be.

There are boys who are deserving of a

better show than they get. What the world needs is stronger parents and truer parents, who will teach their children and instil into their young minds those noble traits and manly qualities that will develop sterling characters, so that when they have a chance to make good they can demonstrate their ability.

MARRIAGE.

MARRIAGE.

When I was in school we used to debate every Friday afternoon on subjects of interest. I remember one week the subject for discussion was, "Whether there is more happiness in anticipation than in realization."

Like many other questions that came up before our society for settlement, this question was never settled to the satisfaction of all, although judges whom we appointed were supposed to base on the evidence of points produced. Since then, or as one grows older and gets into the practical things of life, other questions are constantly coming to the front that are controverted and the best moral philosophers can not settle them. One question quite common is this, "Is marriage a failure?" The answer to that question is to be given by those who have been either happy or unhappy in the marriage state. It is a question that no one can answer for another, and no one can safely say whether his friends ought to marry or remain single. It is a

responsibility we do not like to assume to suggest to our friends what to do in a matter supposed to be for life.

There is this one argument in favor of "single blessedness," as one of our writers describes it. It is always possible for a single person to change his condition, but it is not always possible for a married person to be released from the bonds that hold him.

Considering the nature of society to-day, it remains an open question whether marriage is preferable to the single state. It all depends upon one's purpose in life. Most girls at an early period regard it as their natural duty to marry, and many of them build bright air castles as to what their future will be. How happy it is that our young can see only the brightest in the affairs of life. How many there are who have started out with the same bright hopes, noble resolves to be useful, and whose lives have been a miserable wreck, many times caused by conditions for which they were in no wise responsible. Even our great men will sometimes say, "If they had known what was before them when they

started out in life they do not believe they could have had the heart to have made the start." Fortunately for us, a wise providence hides these things from us, and with each duty, or responsibility, or disappointment there comes corresponding strength to endure it. Looking at marriage from the young woman's side, it is one she must decide by her purpose in life. Many young men to-day hesitate to marry because so many girls are earning their own living, and they know that they can not support a wife and give her as much money for her own use as she has enjoyed while she was working. Yet the true girl or wife will never let such considerations influence her; but if the love comes from the heart she will bravely and without complaint prove her devotion to the man of her choice by living within his income, and, if health permits, even laying a little by for a cloudy day. But if a young woman's ambition is to dress and to spend a husband's money and to attend afternoon clubs and other functions that take her time and interest from the home, no young man should ever enter into such an alliance. Our daily

papers constantly record that many young men who meant well have been tempted to steal in order to give their extravagant wives the money that they almost demanded from them. On the other hand, there are so many noble women who have lived and fulfilled a career that they never could have filled had they been tied down by home duties. What woman would not envy the useful life of Frances E. Willard? Who would not rejoice to have the name that has been won by Florence Nightingale, whose voice has thrilled thousands and thousands by its power? And in our present day, where is a woman who is more revered than our own Helen Gould?

These are all strong characters who have remained single, their usefulness not being interfered with. They doubtless realized that in married life there would have been a restraint and criticism by those who would consider that their duties were in their homes; but bravely they have mapped out their courses of life; they have formed their own ideas and they have worked up to them, and the world has been pleased by the beautiful lives they

have lived, by the spotless characters they have exhibited.

But these are only a few. In every city and a proportionate number throughout the whole country are those who have remained single from choice. Personally, I have great admiration for a good woman who prefers to go through life independent of all others, making her own living; free to go and come when she pleases; asking no one for what money she needs; her mind at rest and at peace with all mankind; her rest unbroken by late hours and possible jangling or contention, and in every way absolutely her own boss. Such a woman is brave compared to one who marries simply to let the world know that she could marry. Let no girl ever get such a thought in her head. The only true marriage that is recorded in heaven is where heart is joined to heart and hand is joined to hand; where both live and work for one common purpose; where a sorrow of one is a sorrow of the other; where a joy of one is a joy of the other; and where there is that true conscious purpose in life that makes them feel that life is duty, and not altogether beauty.

UNCROWNED HEROES.

UNCROWNED HEROES.

You are familiar with the ancient Grecian games, which had much to do with the physical development of that historic nation. The Grecian sports were a part of the national and religious life, and he who won in the contest and received the olive wreath was prouder than he who captured a city. The highest proficiency was required to enable those participants to hope for the crown; and the plaudits of the people who greeted them along the streets as they sought their homes was, indeed, music to their ears. Months of careful training had fitted them for the contest. The winning of the crown, whether olive, pine or parsley, was all they wanted. It meant glory, and recognition, and the self-satisfaction which comes from success.

But I want to call your attention in this letter to another class that we have with us to-day, who, indeed, run well in the life-race before them, but who achieve no earthly appreciation for service faithfully rendered. They

would be entitled to be in a class, all by themselves, of uncrowned heroes.

If the term hero truly means, as I believe it does, "a sincere man," and the term heroine "a sincere woman," there have been countless thousands who have lived and died unrecognized and uncrowned. Shall I call their lives failures because they have not received worldly recognition? Shall I call that mother's life a failure who has given all her strength and care to the faithful rearing of her children? Shall I call that little white-haired woman who sits quietly and contentedly in the easy chair by the street window, who has raised a son who possesses all the noble and manly traits that her devotion has inculcated in his nature, a failure? Has she given her vigilance day and night to his constant concern with the expectation of earthly recognition? Does that son appreciate the sleepless nights and the anxious hours that were given in devoted attention to that delicate child of hers when its life hung in the balance? Methinks that little white-haired woman is supremely happy in the retrospection of life's work well

done and in the contemplation of her son's success in life, and the strong character that he presents to the world as a result of her rigorous discipline and motherly affection.

There is a class of uncrowned heroes who are seldom fully appreciated, considering the sacrifices they make in their enforced loneliness. They are the wives of faithful men of God, who go here and there preaching the Gospel, leaving the wife and little children at home, sometimes, for months. Are they any less heroes, in rearing noble boys and girls, than the soldier who goes to the front? Then think of the widows and orphans that war has made; yet I have never known a widowed mother but whose ambition was to rear children that they might be "brave like father."

But a few personal allusions will make this letter more forcible. And how glad I am that you have had personal knowledge of some of these beautiful characters to whom I refer. And the knowledge of these justify us in saying that the world is full of heroes who have never desired to be recognized by an unsympathetic world. You have met people, and so

have I, who have given you the impression that there was nothing whatever in life that had ever caused them distress of mind, acute physical suffering, or been a weight upon their hearts. How little we know about the load they were carrying. How many times have we struggled to keep the world from knowing our own mental agony; and as we have thus dissembled, so have others; so that I believe I am justified in saying that there is not a household in which the members do not carry in their hearts and in their minds feelings that they would keep from the world. And perhaps, after all, this is well, as its effect is to keep us humble and to cause us to show consideration where we might otherwise be haughty and uncharitable.

I call to mind a brother whose life I thought had been entirely free from anxiety or sorrow. He is a fine, healthy-looking man, who always greets you with a smile and has a cheerful word. I have often remarked that I wished I could be as light-hearted as he. Imagine my great surprise and personal grief when I learned, in subsequent years, that a

sorrow had come into his life years ago that had nearly crushed his spirit. But for the sake of his loved ones he had made a noble fight and kept the knowledge of this affair from the world; and it was not a matter in which he was personally involved, except through love for those near and dear to him by the ties of blood.

Another beautiful character that we have admired for years is that of "a sister in Israel" who has always made us feel that her life had been one sweet existence. Her letters have always been filled with that spiritual sunshine that made you feel better after reading them Her counsel was always wise. She wrote and spoke with all the tenderness and fervor of a mother. She was liberal with the means she possessed, although actually existing on less per month than many would spend in one week, in order that she might have more to give to those who needed it. Naturally, I regarded her life as a model life and her earthly pilgrimage as almost ideal. Yet imagine my surprise and deep sorrow when I learned, just recently, the sad life she

has had. Now read her own words while she tells us, after forty years of such experiences, "what her faith means to her":

"Oh, for language to thunder down the ages the almighty things it has done for a life lacking only one milestone of reaching the allotted threescore years and ten; bereft of brother and sister in early years; later, while still only thirty, bereft of husband and children, broken-hearted and wrecked in health, and handicapped by an affliction that debarred me from worldly amusements as well as the deeper enjoyment of song, and prayer, and sermon. My faith has reconciled me to all things, and

"When I traveled the valley of sorrow,
So dreary and dark to my view,
I knew that Jesus was walking beside me,
And calmly we journeyed it through;
And now I look back to the valley
As the richest I ever have trod,
For I learned there the love of the Father
And leaned on the arm of my God.

"And now my greatest regret is that I have not the power to lead the sorrowing, suffering souls of others to the heights I've reached, heights climbed with many backward slides,

with heart almost palsied with agony as I felt the ingratitude and treachery of friends on whom my wealth of love and confidence had been unselfishly poured; with eyes blinded by tears and feet worn and bleeding with the roughness of the way, many times closing my eyes with an appeal of anguish that they might open in heaven, which was not to be yet a little while, until, unaided by human hand or sympathy, I should reach the heights of perfect trust lighted by the sun of eternal faith, and look back over the way I came with joy and thanksgiving for the peace it has brought me, and the strength and power to feel for others and point them to the source of my deliverance. I may be a stranger in a strange land so far as the possession of worldly happiness goes, but I can be cheerful with a cheerfulness born of content with the Father's way, no matter how alluring other ways may look. I am sure he chooses best, and will, as in the past, guide my wayward feet and save me from myself.

"Volumes would not tell all faith has done for me, and my daily and hourly prayer is,

it may be my abiding guest while life lasts. While people wonder how one in such circumstances can be so contented, I am

> "Listening to a voice they can not hear,
> And holding to a hand they can not see."

Is not that a triumphant song? Yes, more than the olive wreath, for her joy reaches beyond.

Yet another case like we meet so many of. I have a personal friend who is a kind-hearted working girl, who always seems so cheerful. I see her every day. I have often admired her happy disposition, and yet I learned that her life's dream, too, had been an awful awakening, and that she was forcing herself every hour of her life to appear happy for the sake of her sweet little girl of six years, whose father had deserted mother and child. We who are familiar with city life see so many cases like this.

Now shall I say that these, representatives of the human family, are anything less than uncrowned heroes? The general, by a fortunate combination of conditions, may make a sudden dash and defeat his enemy or capture

the city; the nation rises with one voice of praise and he is hailed as a hero. But there are those who belong to the great human family who have struggled on for years and concealed their feelings, who have lived upright lives for the sake of home and country— for these, in my judgment, the most glittering crown would not do justice to their fidelity. Love has been their impelling force, and love seeks only its own.

But there is the personal battle that must be fought out by the individual himself. There comes a time in the life of every person when he must decide between good and bad, and his future life will be according to his decision. This struggle to control self is, doubtless, the fiercest battle that we all must fight. On the winning or losing of this struggle depends our future — a life of strong character and respectability, or a life that means degradation and social blight. Every one knows the contending forces in his nature. According to our strength of will, aided by the Divine Force, we must decide, when the crisis comes, whether the crown is ours by our triumph over self.

AN EDUCATED WIFE.

AN EDUCATED WIFE.

I remember talking to you once about the value, or necessity, of womanly accomplishments — whether or not a woman could fill her particular place in life without having the same education as her husband. I have had a similar conversation with a worthy young woman who expected to marry soon. Her greatest concern was that she felt so inferior to her husband in point of education. I have thought of the matter frequently since we talked about it, and believe it will serve a good purpose to say more on that subject in this letter.

An education often helps only the one who possesses it. A man or woman may graduate from a dozen colleges and yet the world never be any better for the knowledge they possess. The best educated person is the one who knows how and when to use the knowledge or talent he possesses. To speak directly, a woman may have a talent for music and be naturally so full of melody that it seems to

come from her without her knowing it, and the world is blessed by her happy faculty to be always singing. Another may be blessed with a beautiful face, and if that beautiful face is also adorned with a happy expression, it will carry sunshine into the life of every soul with which it comes in contact. Education alone couldn't do that.

But to get at the matter more directly, let me specify a few living examples and see if education is a necessity to a happy and successful life. My own father was a man filled with an ambition to get to the top of the ladder. He succeeded, but not by his own efforts alone was he able to reach that point. His wife, my mother, was the patient helper that was ever ready to stand at his side and say, "Husband, I am willing to suffer privation for your sake." She was the center of home life for the children; we always went to her for help or sympathy and never went to father. Yet he was educated and she wasn't. But her lack of college training did not make her any less a faithful and ready helper in his work.

My sister was a college graduate. She married a classmate who was a lawyer — one of the poor kind, who had to begin at the bottom. But she pledged her love to him, and that meant a willingness to suffer to help him. To-day he is a judge, but he did not become so through his own efforts alone; he had her constant interest to encourage him. And now in the cares of a household, what does her education amount to? She has forgotten all the Latin, Greek and German she ever knew and half the other things she learned at college. But his success was made possible by her entering into the spirit of his work and proving herself a true and willing helpmeet.

These two cases are in our own family; one was educated and the other was not, yet the two were successful in their particular calling. These examples prove that the education of the wife is no factor at all, but the secret of their success was in the fact that they both had the same purpose in life and they pulled together as mates should.

But let me go further; take other prominent men. There is Captain Lambert, the

postmaster; who ever heard anything about his wife's education? There is Dr. Moncrief; what value has his wife's education been to the world? Take Dr. Ward, whom you know as a great editor; his wife is one of the humblest of women, but thoroughly good. Yet I don't know how much of an education she ever had. You never heard anything about the education of the wives of Talmadge, Beecher, Spurgeon, Gladstone, Garfield, McKinley, and hundreds of others that you can call to mind.

No, my dear child, the head of the household is not usually conspicuous by reason of her mental development or possession of knowledge, or higher education, as some call it. *Her power is in her influence.* Which would you prefer, to have a diploma from some big college, or to hold a powerful influence for good over your husband? There is your stronghold, if you will retain it.

But now I want to speak in a personal way. Suppose, for the sake of making it plainer and more to the point, that you were my wife. Suppose I should come home at night and tell you a tale of misfortune — that some one had

been trying to injure my character. What do you think would give me the more help and strength, to have you go and get a Greek book or a Latin oration, or to have you give me those expressions of fidelity and endearment that could make me strong enough and brave enough to face the whole world? Of what use would your education be at such a time?

Again, suppose I should come home with a broken limb. What would be of more service at such a time, a finished education, or a tender and gentle hand that could nurse the patient back to strength and give him patience in his suffering?

Suppose, again, that I should have all my property swept away by business failure. If you were educated you might think that *my* failure had disgraced you. But if you possessed the spirit of unwavering love you would say, "My dear, I am ready and willing to start over and help you even harder than in the past." Of what value would your education be in all these extremities? None whatever.

And again, on the other hand, suppose I should be prospered with your help and possess an abundance of everything. You would then be so occupied in doing good to others and helping deserving friends and neighbors that you would never think about your education. You would be happy in your consciousness of blessing your fellow beings.

No, no, the home ties are love, love, love. Give me a wife whose full and confiding love I possess absolutely, and the others can have their educated wives. I want a wife that has a word of welcome, and an affectionate nature that makes me feel her sympathy, and a smile that makes me rejoice in her presence, and an influence that will draw every one to her. If a wife has all these blessings, and knows her power over her husband, would she trade them for a higher education?

A VISION OF LIFE.

A VISION OF LIFE.

A mother is bending over the cradle of her first born. For six months she has been the happiest woman in all the world. There had been times when she had thought she could not be happier, but this experience had brought her the greatest joy her life had ever known.

As she contemplated the silent features of her child, she was impressed with the fact that man, the most wonderful of all God's creative beings, is, in his infancy, the most helpless of them all.

She watched the breathing of her child. She placed her hand gently on its soft, tender cheek and seemed to throw the whole force of her personality into the heart and life of that tender plant. While beholding her child, in this reflective state of mind, the little babe awoke, and seeing its mother near it, beamed forth a sweet smile. The doting mother was overjoyed at this welcome awakening, and, seizing the babe from its cradle, pressed it close to her bosom and fairly smothered it

with kisses. Having satisfied herself in this way, she laid the babe again tenderly on its pillow and seated herself on the edge of the couch in rapt devotion and admiration. Time after time she leaned forward and pressed a mother's kiss upon its happy face, and was rewarded each time with a sweet smile and an effort to coo.

In a few moments the mother's manner changed somewhat and she became deeply serious. She asked herself the question, "Am I too happy?" and for fear she might suffer the loss of this earth's happiest blessing she resolved that she would not give way entirely to her personal pleasure over the child, but look to matters that pertained to the child's future welfare and happiness. She realized and had always felt that in any position of service she had ever held, she had done her work faithfully and thoroughly, and was satisfied and happy that in her service at home, under her mother's discipline, she had been a faithful and obedient daughter. But now, as she sat contemplating her child on the pillow, she was made to feel that, while she had been

faithful in all her own personal service, her greatest duty and her greatest responsibility was just ahead of her in the care and training of her child. As she thought of these things and associated her own early years with the later events of her life, she could see, as in a dream, what she hoped would be the future of her beautiful child. She beheld it in all of its helplessness and purity as it lay before her, with no sense of fear, no realization of anything more than to feel hungry and be satisfied. Then she saw the child when it reached that peroid when it would be able to say, "I loves oo, mamma," just as she had heard her mother tell of her own first words. This thought then led her to think that soon this little tender bundle of flesh would be able to communicate its thoughts to her. The anticipation seemed to overwhelm her sympathetic and emotional nature. "Oh, I just fear," she said, "that something awful will happen to take this darling from me." Then she said, "I mustn't think of that. I must consider only my personal duty," and with a silent prayer to God to give her help and

strength she made a silent vow that that babe should have the constant devotion of her entire life. "Just think," she said aloud to herself, "it won't be long until he can talk, and it will be only a few days, seemingly, until he will be ready for school. Oh, dear, what will I do when he gets out with all the common children and learns their mischievous ways, and comes under the influence of wicked words and the children of careless mothers?" She could see him starting out to school led by the hand of one of the older neighbor children. Through all these six years of constant, almost hourly, care she had kept her child from all except the tenderest expressions of love from mother, father and the immediate family. The child was obedient in every point where a child of that age can learn obedience. He came to his mother with every little detail and told her every word he had heard from the lips of others, and buried his head in her lap when his heart had been almost broken by the imagined injuries by playmates; had cuddled down in her arms when weary with play, and had gone off into sweet dreams

when his eyelids had closed in childhood's sweet sleep.

But now this day had ended, and he must, in his childhood ways, go out into the world. The first hour that her babe was out of her sight receiving the simplest instructions in the school room the mother's mind was momentarily with her child, wondering what he was doing and what he was learning, but fearing and dreading most of all the first impressions that would be made on his young life by the things he would see and hear from others. She knew that that child would not come back to her just the same sweet child he was when he left her that morning. She knew from her own experience that he would sooner or later develop a tendency to no longer tell mother everything and make her the confidant as in his early childhood days. She knew, also, that he would pick up little innocent forms of deception. And all of this filled her with dread as she contemplated her responsibility during the next twenty years of her boy's life.

Then she could see him as he reached the

age when he would mingle with other young people; when he would be forming associations altogether to his own liking; when he wouldn't consult his mother as to this friend and that one, but regard himself competent to select friends according to his own personal liking. She realized the danger of this and studied how she might still hold him under her influence. She believed she could do it. "With God's help I will try it, and if I bring him up realizing that his welfare is my first and only thought; that I think more of his life than I do of my own; that I am willing to sacrifice everything that I have for his own good; and by other exhibitions of affection make him feel, as well as know, that my heart truly yearns for him in his manhood days as much as it did in his baby life, perhaps I can hold him under my power." She recalled, during this retrospection, the failure, as she considered it, of the mothers of some of her associates, who had practically turned their boys and girls over to the world when they had reached the age of fourteen or fifteen. "How strange," reflected this mother, "that

our mothers are so thoughtless of their children at the very time of all their lives when they need the mother's most thoughtful care and direction. Why will so many parents deliberately let their children blunder onto things that ought to be taught them as faithfully as they are taught to reverence and worship the God of heaven?" And then she breathed another prayer, "Oh, God in heaven, protect this child of mine from the awful temptations that I have endured."

Again the hourglass turns and she beholds him assuming the responsibilities of life. "Oh, if I could only see what kind of a wife he will select, I could tell what kind of a man he will be. Oh, if the girls and women only knew the power they have over their husbands, how much more would they exert it for good instead of for evil or mere passing fancies! It gives me more pleasure to have my husband say I have helped him than to say that I look beautiful. But if this boy of mine should marry a careless or fickle-minded girl, all of my care will have been for nought. All of this devotion that I am now bestow-

ing upon this dear creature will have been wasted." Then she caught herself and corrected her feelings by saying, "No, that can not be. If I make this child of mine carry the impress in his heart and life of all that I am trying to give him, he can not do otherwise than associate with good girls and choose a noble character for his companion. My duty is to form this child's character so that nothing in this world can move him. I can do it by firmness, all the while maintaining that tenderness and impressing that sincere love that he even now realizes when he gives me these dear, sweet smiles. This child shall never depart from my influence, because I will make him my daily thought and prayer, and he shall grow more and more in the perfect likeness that I want him to possess."

Again she sees him a young man, respected by church and society, not any better than some others, but as good as the best. She sees others that have grown up with him that can be said to be living, but that is about all. She asks the question, "Why the difference?" She answers her own question, "Because I

have made my boy the work of my entire life. These others have let their children shift for themselves. Some of them have turned out better than was expected. Others that had a good start and good parents relied too much on their parentage and made no headway." But here she saw her babe in the enjoyment of his own home, blessed with a true, noble woman, whose idea of life was to be useful rather than beautiful, and yet who became more beautiful each day because of the beautiful life she was living, and because of the positive influence she was exerting. She sees him surrounded with loving children happy in the enjoyment of their home, as her little babe was in the blessing of his home. She sees these children, who now call her "grandma," growing and budding into beautiful, unfolding characters, and she finds her life blessed in knowing that her diligence has contributed to the blessing enjoyed by her son in these obedient children that he is now training.

In her dream she takes her son again on her lap as she used to, and, looking into his manly eyes, her own eyes fill with joyful tears

as she tells him again and again, as she so often did in his childhood days, "My son, you don't know how I watched, and worked, and prayed to make you the good man you are. I couldn't have done it in my own strength, but God gave me the strength. I used to tell you then that you were too young to know it, but some day you would know, and while you may think that I am foolish, now that I am a grandmother, to talk in this way, I want you to feel even yet, as you always have, that you are never too old to do without your mother's counsel; and when, before many years, you will be able to find the silver threads among the gold, you can feel comforted in knowing that your conduct has never at any time brought any gray hairs to your old mother's head. I look back, I believe, over the happiest life ever lived by any mother, and I want this blessing transmitted to you, to your faithful wife, and to your loved ones."

She started up. Her child was asleep. "Why, what a funny day dream I have been having — a regular vision of life. May God cause it to be as I have seen it."

IDEALIZING THE REAL.

IDEALIZING THE REAL.

I am indebted to you for this subject: "If we can not realize our ideal, then let us idealize the real." I thank you for the subject.

What a happy world this would be if we could always rise above our environment! It is most unfortunate that some people make the whole world miserable because of their irritable state of mind. Most of us are alone responsible for our mental condition. In our present day the majority of children are spoiled for future life by being humored and pampered. They get nearly everything they want, and this gratification woefully unfits them for life. As they grow older this trait becomes more firmly fixed. Nothing moves just right unless it moves for their individual benefit. Nothing is said or done just right unless it is done entirely to their liking. This aggravates and often starts trouble, which might be avoided if the children had been properly reared. As a natural result, children to-day form their ideals, and make everybody

miserable if their ideals are not realized. The thought of submitting to others, or of adjusting themselves to enforced conditions, never occurs to them. Naturally, their acquired, arrogant manner makes them disliked by all and unfits them for a companionship that all should look forward to.

On the other hand, if these same people could have been trained to adjust themselves to necessary conditions and would set about to find actual pleasure in the changed conditions, it would not only prove a comfort to themselves, but make them agreeable associates. One of the strongest characters with whom I am acquainted is a good Christian mother, now in middle life, whom I met in Indiana. She has raised a family of three children and has seen them all become Christians. This woman's early married life was so strenuous that the average woman would have shrunk from it in dismay and gone back to her mother. This model woman had the entire charge of the housework on a large farm, with all the hard labor connected therewith, and only a growing daughter to help

her. Four and five hungry men had to be fed three and four times a day, with the children to be dressed and sent to school. All the crocks, bottles and pans required by a large dairy had to be cleaned and scalded twice a day; and yet that well-balanced woman was, I believe, the most cheerful and good-natured wife I ever knew. The sudden arrival of company would not give her the least distress. She would immediately say something to make everybody laugh. If they came in at meal time, she had that rare, resourceful faculty of getting an abundance together, so that all could be well supplied from her table. She set about her work as free from worry and anxiety as a child plays with its toys, and everything she did turned out just right. Every act of labor by her was performed with as much merriment and personal pleasure as would be found at an old-fashioned picnic. It was a pleasure to be in her house, as she was always the same at all times. I never knew her to exhibit impatience or displeasure. I know, too, from my own visiting in her home, that that woman had just as many things on

her heart and mind as the average woman. Although she is now only in middle life, she has been gray for several years, indicating that matters, that weighed on her heart and were kept from the household, had left their impress. She carried them as her own personal burdens, and her children never dreamed but that she was as free from anxiety as they were. She had the happy faculty of rising above her environment, of adjusting herself to the needs of her household. Encouraged by her cheerful aid, her husband could perform his duties with a happiness and lightness of heart that would make him the envy of his neighbors. So I can truly say that this adjustable woman has made an impression on others that has reached far beyond her family circle.

She was one woman in ten thousand, and I can easily imagine that some would say that such a rare creature does not exist. But she most certainly does, and although she may be a most remarkable exception to the general rule, nevertheless I believe that many more of our women could be like her if they could

school themselves to adjust themselves to necessary conditions. She was an example of idealizing the real.

It isn't our good women alone who are included in this subject, but the sterner sex must come in for the part they must play in helping to idealize the real. I don't know how many homes either of us could count where there has been, every day for years, the ideal domestic condition. The old saying is that "the course of true love never did run smooth," and as it requires two to make a quarrel, it is often possible for the second one to not only dispel the approaching shadow of a coming quarrel, but also to drop a remark or get off a joke, so that what might have led to angry words may result in a convulsion of laughter. A person, to possess this faculty, must be an adept in idealizing the real.

Many men in business have long learned that if their ambitions have not been realized, they have made an honest effort. They have worked early and late and have been nobly supported by thoughtful, sympathetic wives. The aspirations they have had, the things they

have coveted, have perhaps not been realized, but happy are the man and wife who can adjust themselves to the pleasures and comforts of home life, and find in each other's society all that makes life worth while and the practical idealization of the real.

FRIEND, SWEETHEART, WIFE.

FRIEND, SWEETHEART, WIFE.

As I pen this last letter to you my thoughts go back over a period of fifteen years or more, covering our acquaintance. I knew you as a child in your own home and in the Sunday school, of which you were a faithful attendant. I watched your gradual development from childhood to girlhood and from girlhood to young womanhood; and when, ten years ago, you started out on a business career, I could but think of you as still the child I had known years before. We are only enabled to realize the fleetness of time when we see those who were once children developing into full-grown boys and girls, young men and women.

I do not suppose any one of all your friends enjoyed your confidence as completely as I did, and naturally many things that entered into my own life were known to you only and sacredly guarded; though in doing so you went contrary to all tradition concerning

woman's ability, or inability, to keep matters to herself.

I have watched you with almost fatherly anxiety in the formation of new friendships, knowing how they are bound to influence a young and impressionable life. All of us are disappointed in some associations we form, but with the experience we gain we are the better able to exercise caution and wisdom in the few intimate friendships that all persons should have. It is oftentimes necessary, and an advantage, to have an extensive acquaintance, and "he who would have friends must show himself friendly"; but we can all reserve the personal privilege of electing as few as we wish to membership in the inner circle of chosen and particular friends.

Every young girl draws a picture, or builds an air castle, of her future life. She will expect certain events to transpire as naturally as the days come and go. She even anticipates the time when she will have a castle of her own and be queen of her own realm. She even anticipates and provides things that will be useful and needful in her new sphere.

Sometimes these castles will tumble, and joy and anticipation will be forced to give way to sorrow and vanished hopes; yet most of us are kept content with the thought that some day our desires will be gratified and our hopes realized; and with these meditations we keep constantly alive the hope which, the poet says, "springs eternal in the human breast."

The transition period comes; we form closer friendships. This person appeals to us as worthy; and what was simply platonic friendship develops into something of a more heartfelt nature. This may thrive for a period and sometimes vanish. Others come into our lives that appeal to us in a stronger degree. These friendships may sometimes be numerous before we are sure we have found the one that could be in every sense a true partner in all of the experiences of life. The wisdom which comes with mature years enables us to form the association that bids fair to be blessed with all things that should make life one grand, sweet song. The chosen one is no longer regarded simply as a friend, but has suddenly become a sweetheart, a term that is

too often lightly used. How things do change when this period has arrived!

Instead of the humdrum monotony of life there is unconsciously a love song running through our mind and often slipping from our lips. The whole world seems changed. Our hearts go out in affection to everybody. We are learning the real meaning of life in all its original purity and fullness. Oh, if we could only remain that way!

It was but natural, when I learned of your decision to assume the responsibility of a wife, to inwardly hope and pray that you might have the strength and patience to prove the very best wife in all the world. When I recall your faithful service and how you constantly labored for the interest of your employer, I was made to feel that if you proved as willing a helper to your life companion he would, indeed, be of all men most blessed. Fortunately, you have had opportunity to observe much of life in every phase, and are thus prepared to meet many experiences with a foreknowledge that will make many things easier for you.

But I want to speak of one or two other matters of greater importance. At all times consider your influence over your household. A woman of tact and judgment can oftentimes save herself many days of bitter tears. Absolute confidence and sincerity are necessary requisites to continued peace and happiness. Deception in any form will come out sooner or later. Let your influence be that sweet womanly goodness that will make you the only creature in all the world to your husband. Do not attempt to meet the battles of life alone; you must have God's help for the duties and trials of each day. Unless He is the silent partner of your life, you will experience many failures. Think not of the past, but live for the present and the future. Be true to the friends you have who are worthy of your friendship, but do not seek for many friends simply to be popular. Your time and your affection belong to your husband. Think of him first and last. With hearts truly welded together, as I believe yours are, time only can reveal the real strength of your love for each other. With the development of the

spiritual affection you should be dearer to each other and appreciate each other more with each succeeding day. Circumstances may separate you for a time, but this separation should only intensfy your affection. As husband and wife you should grow in all that is true and beautiful as naturally as a Christian is expected to grow in grace and in the knowledge of his Lord and Savior, so that when the end of the race is run you can feel that you are entitled to the perfect home that belongs to the children of God.

But, in conclusion, I want to speak of the grandest privilege that a happy wife can have. If God in his wisdom sees fit to bless you with a sweet messenger of love and peace, I am sure you will not shrink from the responsibility placed upon you. Indeed, I have every reason to believe that you would give it the strongest affection and care within your ability, and I am sure, with the training you have had, you will guide aright any precious life that may be intrusted to your care. I am sure you will draw it to your heart, and with its every breath instil into its

life that strong mother love that will guide it safely in later years and cause it to seek mother's counsel and protection. Such rays of sunshine in a home can dispel the deepest gloom. Yet, should there be moments of sudden irritability, provocations that may upset, temporarily, the harmonies of the household, these can easily and quickly be met and smoothed over because of the sweet, smiling face that looks up into the eyes of mother and father, and says in its baby language, "I love you both." Many times what some families regard as a bone of contention, or as an undesirable intruder, may be made the peacemaker, the dove divine, that can bring about concord of love and a sweet harmony, without which the battle of life would be only monotonous discord.

May Heaven bless you in all of the present and future responsibilities that you may have to meet.

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